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# **DIALOGUE AND THE TRANSPERSONAL IN THERAPY**

*PRESENTED BY*

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**2006**

**Research Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Works**

**Context Statement**

**Middlesex University**

**School of Health and Social Sciences**

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## 1. BACKGROUND

This is the record of a process extending over thirty years. It deals with the exploration of a somewhat complex theme. In the present document we have to look at the two main aspects of this work: the conceptualisation of internal dialogues and the conceptualisation of the spiritual realm, which we shall call the transpersonal. This will be done through giving an account of how they emerged in my work, particularly in the two books of mine which are relevant: *Subpersonalities: The People Inside Us* (1990) and *The Transpersonal: Spirituality in Psychotherapy and Counselling* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) (2005a).

First we shall look at the internal dialogue, the general term we shall be using to cover the broad and highly complex world of multiplicity within the normal psyche.

### THE INTERNAL DIALOGUE

This is the theme of my book *Subpersonalities*. The concept of an internal dialogue is of course a familiar one. In literature it is a common theme, and in everyday life it is often mentioned. Most of us have had conversations with ourselves at times. It is not so commonly recognised in psychology, however, probably because there is no one great man associated with this way of thinking about the person. I became interested in it, after ten years of work in social psychology, in the early 1970s. I named this area of study 'subpersonalities', because at the time this seemed the most useful term. I first reported on it at the Annual Conference of the British Psychological Society in 1975, in a paper entitled "The internal society". I continued to publish articles and conduct workshops in this area, including at an Annual Conference of the British Association for Counselling, and taught many people how to use the idea. After a while I noticed that there was still no book on this

subject, and no references to subpersonalities in any textbook of personality. So I decided to write a monograph myself to put the concept on to the map. This book (Rowan 1990) covers the history, the practice, the research and the philosophy relevant to the topic. The book came out in 1990, and so far has had nothing but favourable reviews. There is still no reference to subpersonalities (or any of its 24 synonyms) in any widely used textbook of personality known to me, though as we shall see, the concept of a self-schema is beginning to creep in. But again there has been a good deal of interest in this from other countries, and particularly from the US. This leads me to believe that this part of my work will have more influence in the future. Recently I have co-edited (with Mick Cooper, 1999) an academic book on the plural psyche, which has some excellent contributors, and which I hope will take the field forward still further. It has become clear that the idea of subpersonalities (or more generally, some form of internal dialogue) can be used in place of the concept of the unconscious, for those who find the whole concept of the Freudian unconscious a stumbling block. Instead of a single entity, the unconscious, it refers to many internal entities, each of them with a history and a way of seeing the world and a motive for being there. It offers a way of exploring psychodynamics in a transparent yet effective way.

It does this by using the method of personification. If we find that a person has any kind of division or split within themselves, we can as therapists suggest to the client that they put one side of the split on to one chair, and the other side on to another, and assume or pretend that these are two people who can talk to one another. This personifies the split. In other words, we turn the theory of internal dialogue into an active method of work in psychotherapy or counselling. One of the clearest writers on this topic is the Jungian Robert Thompson (1986), and there is a

good deal of coverage in the work of the psychosynthesis school (Whitmore 2004). Very often the pursuit of this dialogue results in some kind of resolution or even transformation, which moves the therapy on. Perhaps the best description of how this can happen is to be found in the writings of Alvin Mahrer (e.g. 1989).

Perhaps that is enough to delineate the basic idea of an internal dialogue.

Now let us equally briefly introduce the basic idea of the transpersonal.

## **PSYCHOSPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

This is the central topic of my book *The Transpersonal*. The transpersonal is in general the realm of spirituality, including mysticism. But it attempts to be more precise and more clearly defined than the term 'spirituality' allows.

### **WHAT THE TRANSPERSONAL IS NOT**

Sometimes it helps to set some boundaries to a concept, so that we can tell more easily what it is not. Here are some of these boundaries, which are helpful, I believe, in defining the transpersonal. First of all, to lay out the basic model, it is helpful to distinguish between the prepersonal, the personal and the transpersonal. The personal is the ordinary everyday consciousness with which we are all familiar; the prepersonal is all that comes before that in the process of psychospiritual development, and is well described in developmental psychology generally (e.g. Craig 1992); and the transpersonal is that which genuinely goes beyond the personal into the realm of the sacred, the divine. (See Appendix and Figure 1 for some details of this). But let us look at some of the boundaries which are not so often referred to or described.

### **The transpersonal is not the extrapersonal**

A distinction has been drawn by Alyce and Elmer Green (1986) between the extrapersonal and the transpersonal. Some of the contrasts are laid out in Table 1 in Appendix C.

Green & Green (1986) originally supplied the evidence on which this table is based, and they suggest that the basic distinction is that in the transpersonal there is something divine, whereas the extrapersonal is basically nondivine. This may be a tricky way of making the distinction, because how can anything be nondivine, strictly speaking? But I think it can be helpful in pointing in the right direction. The point is that the extrapersonal can sometimes be simply a gift that the person has. It can simply be a wild talent, perhaps present from an early age.

These talents can also be attained as a result of transpersonal development, and then they are often called *siddhis*. "All the major systems of mystical spirituality agree that such powers do exist, but maintain they have nothing to do with attaining gnosis or realization or ultimate spiritual reality." (Anthony et al 1987, p.21) These systems of mystical spirituality generally take it that the ultimate aim is to know reality in a direct way, not through the mediation of the senses or the thoughts or even the imagination. Another way of putting it is to say that even when these skills or abilities do emerge from spiritual practice, they can be described as "mysticism with one foot still in the gross" (Wilber 1995, p.609)

### **The transpersonal is not the same as the right brain**

There is a lot of interest these days in the two halves of the brain, and it is often said that our civilization neglects the right brain and overstresses the left brain. Book after book comes out attributing more and more marvellous characteristics to



the right brain, and we are told that we have to cultivate the right brain more if we are to be whole people. There may be something in this, and there is no wish here to pour cold water on the whole idea, but it is important to make the point that to locate the transpersonal in the right brain is a mistake. If the left brain represents rationality (the personal), the right brain necessarily lumps the transpersonal with the prepersonal, and this is just a conceptual mess.

### **The transpersonal is not the New Age**

There is a good deal of interest these days in the New Age, and in my travels I have seen whole sections of bookshops, and even whole bookshops, devoted to it. But the general attitude of the new age seems to be indiscriminating, and even to be against the whole idea of discrimination. It is a movement founded by David Spangler, stemming from theosophy.

As I look over the shelves of the New Age section in the bookshop, the only thing I can find in common between the books and equipment on show is that they are all suitable for gullible people. There is a complete mixture of the good, the bad and the ugly. If there is anything else in common, it seems to be devotion to the positive at all costs. One must believe anything, accept anything, not question or deny anything. The *Course in Miracles* (a classic New Age text) tells us that love is all there is, and that fear, guilt, pain and death are not real. There is even a book which says in its title that we cannot afford the luxury of even one negative thought. This is to take a one-sided position which cannot be justified, and which is certainly nothing to do with the transpersonal, or with spirituality in any authentic sense.

The New Age people love the transpersonal, but the transpersonal people do not love the New Age.

## **The transpersonal is not religion**

The most general use of the word "religion" is to mean an organization of some kind. We speak of the Christian religion, and include the churches and chapels which publish the holy books and promulgate the holy doctrines. We speak of the Muslim religion, and include the whole organization ranging from the most simplistic fundamentalism to the most sublime Sufism, expressed again in books, art works, rituals, pilgrimages and so forth. We speak of Judaism, and include the whole way in which this is expressed in society, whether fundamentalist, orthodox, liberal, Hasidic or whatever. But the transpersonal entails personal experience of the Subtle and the Causal (these are carefully described later on in this document), which may or may not be expressed in religious terminology. And if it is expressed in some religious way, it is just as likely to be some little-known religion such as paganism, animism, polytheism or pantheism, as one of the better-known and better-organized religions. In other words, the transpersonal is a realm of personal discovery, not something which one joins.

## **The transpersonal is not the spiritual**

Even more importantly, the word spirituality is used so vaguely and generally that we have to question its value. There can be prepersonal spirituality (including fundamentalism), personal spirituality (including existentialism) and transpersonal spirituality (including mysticism). In the early 1970s Roberto Assagioli described the transpersonal as "a term introduced above all by Maslow and by those of his school to refer to what is commonly called spiritual. Scientifically speaking, it is a better word; it is more precise and, in a certain sense, neutral in that it points to that which

is beyond or above ordinary personality. Furthermore it avoids confusion with many things which are now called spiritual but which are actually pseudo-spiritual or parapsychological." (Assagioli 1991, p.16)

### ONE-TWO-THREE-INFINITY

There is a tendency which one can observe in this field to go in for what I have called the "one-two-three-infinity" definition of spirituality, which seems to me dangerously inadequate. In this version we say that there is the body and its sensations (one), the emotions and feelings and desires (two), the intellect and its thoughts (three), and everything else is a sort of mystical oneness called spirituality (infinity).

This kind of thinking is very common with New Age people, with *A Course in Miracles*, with EST (or Forum, as it has also been called), with the Guru Maharaj-Ji, with Transcendental Meditation, with popularised Zen Buddhism, with the Enlightenment Intensive, with Rajneesh (or Osho) and many others who should know better. The dangers of it have been discussed very well by Richard Anthony and his colleagues (1987) in their discussion of cults, where they warn against one-step enlightenment as a snare and a delusion. They call this a unilevel approach, and they have a number of arguments against it, all based on bitter experience and history.

In practice, unilevel groups fail to be effective catalysts for spiritual transformation because of two characteristic flaws that cause them to confuse transcendent and mundane experience. First, they are too literal and "definitive" in their interpretation of language and texts, with too little appreciation of symbolic and metaphoric levels of meaning. This is the

problem of univocality. Second, they harbour the attitude that the value as well as the proof of spiritual transformation lies in predictable, observable consequences in the mundane sphere. This is the problem of consequentialism. Univocality and consequentialism are closely linked and tend to occur together. They are the defining features of the unilevel category.

(Anthony et al 1987, p.41)

They do not mean, of course, that consequences are of no account, merely that to link them too closely to transpersonal experiences makes the everyday consciousness the judge of the transpersonal consciousness - a tempting but inappropriate and unsafe move.

What I am talking about in this document, on the other hand, is what Anthony and his colleagues call a multilevel approach, which they consider to be much safer and less likely to lead to dogmatism and unreality and danger.

It seems to me that there are several quite separate and distinct experiences which can rightly be called spiritual, some of them much more accessible and common than others. In transpersonal practice we begin to explore these experiences and have them for ourselves. We also understand that the transpersonal is not just about experiences, but more about how we understand and live in the world (Ferrer 2002).

With so much of the ground cleared, let us return to the question of the internal dialogue before making explicit the full details of the findings in the realm of the transpersonal.

## 2 THE INTERNAL DIALOGUE

This is a summary and critical review of the book *Subpersonalities*.

Most of us have had the experience of being "taken over" by a part of ourselves which we didn't know was there. We say - "I don't know what got into me." This is generally a negative experience, although it can be positive too, as for example when we find extra strength in an emergency. The way in which we usually recognise the presence of what I have called a subpersonality is that we find ourselves, in a particular situation, acting in ways which we do not like or which go against our interests, and unable to change this by an act of will or a conscious decision. This lasts as long as the situation lasts - perhaps a few minutes, perhaps an hour, perhaps a few hours - and then it changes by itself when we leave this situation and go into a different one. As long as thirty years ago it was possible for a good and quite uncontroversial text on social psychology (Middlebrook 1974) to say things like - "Thus the individual is not a single self, but many selves, which change somewhat as the individual shifts from situation to situation and person to person. We are, in short, what the situation demands." More recently, David Lester (1995) has said: "It seems wrong to single out one of the subselves as a core self and also to have only one façade self. It seems more reasonable to propose several subselves that are equivalent (though differing in their influence on behaviour), in much the same way as a person can have several roles without one being seen as a core role and the others as façade roles." (p.128) And more recently again Donald Pennington (2003), in using the concept of self-schemas as an equivalent to subpersonalities, has made the point that: "A strength of the self-schema approach to personality is that it is strongly embedded in the scientific tradition through

extensive use of experiments. The self-schema also takes the concept of traits or personality differences into looking at cognitive structures or mental representations. This aids understanding the relationship between personality and behaviour through an appreciation of the mental processes causing the behaviour." (p.235)

This concept of self-schemas, because it has been used in many research projects (e.g. Markus 1977), has recently been a point of entry into the major texts on personality (e.g. Pervin et al 2005), and this is a beginning for the full entry of such a concept into the mainstream.

The question of whether there are parts of a person which can be talked to and worked with as if they were separate little personalities with a will of their own is one which has fascinated nearly everyone who has had to work with people in any depth. Phrases like - "On the one hand I want to... on the other hand I don't", "I don't know how I could have done it", "It was as if a voice was telling me off" - are so common that they inevitably give a counsellor or therapist the cue that more than one system is at work. Internalised mothers and fathers are so common that it has almost become a joke. All these are examples of ways in which the idea of subpersonalities presents itself very patently and obviously. In fiction and in plays the idea often comes to the surface. I became interested in the idea and decided to do some research of my own.

## **RESEARCHING SUBPERSONALITIES**

For about three years in the early 1970s I was exploring, in a rather on-and-off manner, my own subpersonalities. It started off from two or three experiences in Gestalt therapy, a very interesting workshop led by the late Jay Stattman, some work

I had done with the psychosynthesis people, and some research work I was doing in social psychology on roles, reference groups, situations and social frames. And my first step was to write down, over a period of two or three months, all the separate aspects of myself I could discover. For example, No.1 was "Enthusiastic project-doer; intense absorption for short period. Very sensitive in this phase, but very selectively."

After a certain point, I didn't seem to be adding any more. And one day it suddenly occurred to me that these were aspects, rather than personalities. Some of them could be grouped together to make personalities. At first I grouped them together into five personalities, and then one of them seemed to split more naturally into two, to make six in all. I gave each one of them a name, which at first was quite arbitrary, having to do with how they had appeared; but later I gave each one a more explicit name, making it clearer to me what function it was performing.

Then I took an LSD trip (perhaps more common then than now, but in any case something familiar to me - I regarded myself as something of an astronaut of inner space), with the explicit object of getting into each of these personalities in turn, and asking the same eleven questions of each of them. This was an extremely useful exercise, which made a number of things very much clearer to me, and made me feel that here was something quite powerful, which could be pushed quite a long way in terms of self-understanding and self-acceptance.

In 1974 I was writing a social-psychology text on groups, and in one of the chapters I experimented with treating myself as a group, consisting of Big Brain, Mr Commitment, Brown Cow, Father, Mr Intensity and Mr Putdown (see Appendix B). This was a unique chapter, which has still not been emulated by anyone else. It raised issues which I think are relevant to any academic text.

The next step was to ask the question - if this works for me, does it work for anyone else? So in 1974 I got together fourteen people who wanted to explore this thing with me, and we held six meetings (four evenings and two whole days) for the purpose. I was already using the new-paradigm model of research, which was later worked out much more fully (Reason & Rowan 1981). At the first meeting, the mean number of subpersonalities reported was 6.5, with a range of from zero to 18. I am inclined at the moment to feel that from 4 to 9 is the normal range, and that anything outside this bears traces of insufficient coverage, at one end, or of duplication, at the other. But it seems also that some people have a different character structure, which does not lend itself to talking in terms of subpersonalities. The people taking part were a mixture of sexes and ages, but all had in common that they had done a certain amount of group work involving self-examination and the acknowledgement of unconscious aspects of themselves.

At the second meeting, certain difficulties were reported, which seem worth mentioning. First, giving names to the subpersonalities aroused some kind of resistance; it seemed to some people a little too much like playing party games. There was something rather frivolous about it.

Second, for some people there did not seem to be any limit to possible personalities. There just seemed to be a proliferation of them. As Vargiu (1974) noted:

When people are first acquainted with the idea of working with subpersonalities, they often tend to do just that, becoming so fascinated with uncovering a teeming cast of thousands that the more fruitful work, of understanding and integrating the central ones, is neglected. (p.WB34)



One way out of this may be to regard "aspects" as different from "personalities", and to say that each subpersonality may have two or more aspects.

Third, some of the subpersonalities mentioned or discovered seemed to be old ones, which could still be remembered, but which were fading or quite unimportant now. This does not seem to be a great problem.

During the second meeting the lists of subpersonalities were revised after discussion, and the mean number of subpersonalities now went up to 7.2, the median and the mode both being 6.

At the fourth meeting a character was worked with coming from a woman of about 25 who was significantly overweight, though not obese. Her total subpersonalities were as follows:

**FREEM:** Monster, enormous, fat, lazy, apathetic, self-destructive. (Freem was originally very beautiful.)

**MADMAN:** (Compound of man and madam.) Parent, moral, critical, demanding, ambitious, competitive, mocking.

**CHILD:** Very dependent, demanding, intense, desperate at times. (Forms torture pattern with Madman and Freem).

**PROFESSOR:** Tall, intellectual, interested in everything.

**CREATIVE:** A creative self, able to invent and solve problems.

**RUTH:** Stable, understanding, sensitive. (Used as front.)

**GINA:** Attractive, happy-go-lucky.

**BULLDOG:** Aggressive, rebels against Madman and everyone else.

A questioning procedure was used to concretise and make explicit the subpersonality in question, which in this case was Freem. It turned out that Freem saw itself as being from some outside space, a kind of limbo. It had seen this girl as a suitable

victim, and invaded her at about the age of fourteen. It grows in strength whenever she is offered conditional love. She says - "Don't make me pay for what I get!" But whenever she does have to pay, by conforming to some standard, Freem uses the opportunity to take over. It seems that if this woman could get a regular supply of unconditional love, Freem would find it hard to get any kind of foothold.

In the course of the long chase after Freem, almost everyone in the group, it seemed, was deeply involved, either with their own Freem equivalents, or with their own relationships with some Freem-type figure. There was a lot of energy in Freem, which appeared to be locked up by the extreme disapproval in which Freem was held, and seemed destructive when it came out. By the end, it seemed that most people in the group were convinced that this energy could be transformed rather than needing to be locked away so firmly. This is a typical example of what Mahrer (1978) refers to as a disintegrative relationship with a deeper potential, which in the research group was examined and questioned. Six months after the group, this woman wrote to me a letter in which the following paragraph appeared:

I have always been aware of a very self-destructive critical aspect of myself (Freem) which up until our investigation was always strongly disapproved of. Now I am more able to conceive of Freem possibly having positive attributes! I am now about two stone lighter than I was when I last saw you! I hope I remain so!

It seems from this that the uncovering of subpersonalities can be a useful means of dealing with self-destruction in at least some of its forms. It is also interesting that this worked even though there was no cathartic experience on the part of the woman involved - though it has to be said that the event was highly emotional for all concerned.

## MY OWN SUBPERSONALITIES

In my own case, after these first six group meetings, I did quite a number of workshops on subpersonalities. Although I would not classify my work as psychosynthesis, I found the ideas of Assagioli (1975) and Ferrucci (1982) very useful. My own characters have changed as time has gone on. The whole idea of reflexive research is that the researcher is not outside the system being studied. It may be interesting to detail something about this, just to show that there is nothing fixed about the subpersonalities, and that to study them does not introduce unnecessary rigidities into the growth process:

**BIG EGGO:** This was the main executive personality, corresponding very much to Jung's Persona. He has appeared as Old Reliable, as Magician and as Clown. From being over-dominant, he is now more of a gatekeeper, or commissionaire, useful on occasion; also now much less of a male stereotype.

**JEAN STARRY:** This arose as an amalgam of two other characters, Brown Cow (a natural, sensual woman who could let things happen and lead groups, a bit like Barry Stevens (1970) but younger) and Mr. Commitment (a progressive, militant character, sometimes like a wooden soldier and sometimes like Jesus). Has appeared as a French Existential Androgyne, as Queen Christina and as a Giant Fairy.

**BLACK DWARF:** Also known as Mr. Putdown. Very much like Jung's Shadow - purely destructive and hateful. Has also appeared as a Black Dog. Also very witty. Used to be very powerful, till I gave up trying to destroy my mother - that was his main purpose in life. This represented a very important breakthrough in my therapy.

**BEHEMOTH:** Creative self. Hasn't changed much, except that I later saw it as an appreciator of discovery, as well as a discoverer. Very changeable, unreliable, brilliant. Later still became integrated into other characters.

**BABETTE:** A very lovable girl child. Also appeared as a Fairy, and a Magical Child. Attractive, dimpled, feminine. Used to be the only lovable one (just as Mr Commitment was the only one who was allowed to be angry) but not really needed now that others are allowed to be lovable.

**LILITH:** A slim dark woman in a shiny dress. Reminds me of my mother when she was young. Maybe Jung's Anima, because she now seems to be very much a permanent part of me, very attractive, sophisticated, positive.

**FATHER:** Just like Jung's Father Complex. Has appeared as Bishop Makarios, as a Door and as a Big Darkie. Didn't deal with him until after the research project was completed, but was very important when I did. Fully absorbed now, and not an issue any more.

**JUST ME:** Seems to have links with Loving Me, Centred Me and Real Self, but there may be more here to sort out in more detail. Later linked up with the archetype of the Horned God (Rowan 1987).

**THE DOME:** My Transpersonal Self. After the first occasion when I got in touch with it (Rowan 1990), it gradually became more and more accessible, until now I can get in touch with it at any time. Made a very important difference to my whole way of seeing the world.

**LITTLE LADY:** A kind of grandmother figure - appeared once as a pair of elderly sisters - very precise, full of knowledge of various things, very patient, very good with their fingers. Now fully integrated, not separate.

I hope this makes it clear that in my version of subpersonality work there is no desire whatsoever to limit the subpersonalities to one type or one number, or one way of developing, changing, fading, appearing or disappearing.

## QUESTIONS USED

This is the list of questions which have been found useful in exploring subpersonalities:

What do you look like?

How old are you?

What kind of situations bring you out?

What is your general approach to the world?

What is your basic motive for being there?

When did you first meet [name of client]?

What have you got to offer?

What are your blocks to full functioning?

What would happen if you took over completely?

What helps you to grow?

How do you relate to women/children/men?

## LATER THINKING

It is an extraordinary fact that until my book appeared in 1990 there was no systematic book on subpersonalities, and the word does not appear in any major text on personality theory known to me. It is not in the dictionaries of psychology nor in the dictionaries of psychotherapy. Yet the thing itself is used by virtually every clinician who has ever written about working with people, and by more and more psychologists paying attention to what is there as opposed to what is supposed to be there. The first question we need to address is whether it can be defined. I used to think it could. My own working definition of a subpersonality was 'a semi-permanent

and semi-autonomous region of the personality capable of acting as a person.' This went further than the definition offered by Brown (1979), who says that subpersonalities are "patterns of feelings, thoughts, behaviours, perceptions, postures and ways of moving which tend to coalesce in response to various recurring situations in life". And I thought it was an improvement on the definition of an ego state of Watkins (1978) where he says that it is "a coherent system of behaviours and experiences with boundaries more or less permeable which separate it from other such systems within the overall Self". It is very close to the definition which Tart (1986) gives of what he calls identity states - "a unique configuration or system of psychological structures or subsystems... to which the sense of 'I' is given." More recently, Dave Mearns has been writing about his use in therapy of the idea of configurations of self: "A 'configuration' is a hypothetical construct denoting a coherent pattern of feelings, thoughts, and preferred behavioural responses symbolised or pre-symbolised by the person as reflective of a dimension of existence within the Self." (Mearns & Thorne 2000, p.102)

But then it seemed that none of this would do. I was trying to find a definition of something which was too wide-ranging, too disparate, to yield to a single definition, no matter how ingenious. Regard the problem: how to reconcile the Freud (1923) who wrote of the ego, the id and the superego; the Jung (1928) who talked about the complexes or the archetypes; the Federn (1952) or Berne (1961) or John Watkins (1978) who spoke of ego states; the Lewin (1936) who wrote about subregions of the personality; the Perls (1951) who referred to the topdog and the underdog, or retroflexion; the Klein (1948) or Fairbairn (1952) or Guntrip (1971) who talked about internal objects; the Balint (1968) who delineated the child in the patient; the Mary Watkins (1986) who described imaginal objects, such as the imaginary

friend; the McAdams (1985) who deployed the concept of imagoes as a key to life histories; the Hilgard (1986) who discovered the 'hidden observer' in hypnotic states; the Tart (1986) who spoke of identity states; the Denzin (1987) who talked about the emotionally divided self; the Winnicott (1965) or Lake (1966) or Janov (1970) or Laing (1976) who referred to the false or unreal self; the Gurdjieff (1950) who introduced the concept of little I's; the Goffman (1974) who referred to multiple selfing; the Stone & Winkelman (1985) who used the concept of energy patterns; the Mahrer (1989) who theorised deeper potentials coming to the surface; the Mair (1977) who opened up the possibility of a community of self; the Ornstein (1986) who spoke of small minds; the Gazzaniga (1985) or Minsky (1988) who discovered agents and agencies within the brain; the Gergen (1972) or Martindale (1980) or O'Connor (1971) or Shapiro (1976) who refer to subselves; the Strauss or Rossan who talk about subidentities; the Markus (1977) who speaks of possible selves; the Kihlstrom and Cantor (1984) who introduce the concept of self-schemas; the T B Rogers (1981) who writes about prototypes; the Beahrs (1982) who refers to alter-personalities, or the Assagioli (1975) or Redfearn (1985) or Sliker (1992) who talk about subpersonalities - all the time we are talking about the same thing - this thing which is not mentioned in the major textbooks of personality.

More recently, there has been a move towards assimilating the idea of subpersonalities into the dialogical model of the person originally put forward by Bakhtin (1981) and Voloshinov (1986). People like John Shotter (1999) and Hubert Hermans (1999) have led the way into the work of people like Philip Bromberg (2004) and others. This is a research-based approach, which puts forward a well developed conception of the person as engaged in dialogues not only external but also internal. This takes the whole idea into a new arena which is far more unified –

perhaps at the expense of making the links with other disciplines which I personally find so valuable. This is a much more philosophical approach as well, taking the trouble to give a sound basis to the research. At the moment I do not feel that this approach quite does justice to the recalcitrant nature of some of the inner voices, which is what made some of us use the word 'subpersonalities' in the first place.

A further innovation in recent years has been the introduction of the 'assimilation model' of William Stiles and others. An interesting example of this work is to be found in Honos-Webb et al (1999), following the therapeutic work of one client, and distinguishing between the different versions of her which emerged during the course of the therapy. More recently, Osatuke et al (2005) have gone through the therapy of one person, just considering the voice quality, and found six sub-systems of the person, each with a different voice. This again is serious research, throwing another new light on to the question of subpersonalities.

And one of the most interesting developments in recent years is the coming of narrative therapy (White & Epston 1990). This follows Foucault's idea that we are often living out other people's stories about us, and sees the object of therapy as beginning to own and create our own stories. In doing this it is often valuable to personalise our problems and confront them as if they were separate persons. This 'challenges the techniques that subjugate persons to a dominant ideology.' (p.29) And these ideas have been built on further by people like Jill Freedman and Gene Combs (1996).

I am therefore now proposing that we drop all attempts to produce neat definitions, and instead look at the whole phenomenon from the standpoint of psychotherapy. From this position all we need to say is that we can make use of: "Any aspect of the person which can be personified." Instead of trying to found the



phenomenon on philosophy or on particular practices or insights, we simply say that in psychotherapy it is often useful to personify aspects of the person, so that the client can interact with them as if they were people, or allow them to interact with each other as if they were people. For some good examples of how this can be done see the moving book by Fritz Perls (1971), for a full discussion of using this approach in practice see Cooper & Cruthers (1999), and for some good research on the practice of methods like this see Strümpfel & Goldman (2002).

And when we do this, what we discover is that it is in transpersonal practice that this move makes most sense. What we need to do next, on this understanding, is to explore such a transpersonal practice, to see how this works.

### 3 PSYCHOSPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

This is a summary and critical review of *The Transpersonal*.

My interest in the transpersonal started with my first mystical experience. In 1944 I was 19 years old, and in hospital with malaria and dengue fever in India. I looked out across the verandah at the sunset, which was a very unusual green colour. All at once I seemed to be taken out of myself into a realm which was quite different from anything I had experienced before. I could only label it as eternity. It did not seem to belong to time. It was as if everything stopped. I had been reading about Spinoza for the first time quite recently, and had been very impressed by that. It seemed that there might be a sort of connection. I did not make much of it. But I remembered it.

I finished my time in the Army, and failed to get in to University, and took a number of unremarkable jobs, and then met a man who introduced me to the ideas of Harold Walsby (1942), who had written a book entitled *The Domain of Ideologies*. Walsby was a man who had adapted evolutionary thinking to the realm of politics. I met him and was very impressed: he became my mentor for about five years, until his death. He was versed in the philosophy of Hegel, especially as modified by the British philosophers F S Johnson and Francis Sedlak. One day we were out in his car, and he asked me what my fundamental beliefs were – things I could not doubt were true. As I brought out each one he demonstrated to me convincingly that it was self-contradictory, and therefore could not be fundamental. (Later I found out that this was one of the basic techniques of the Madhyamika school of Mahayana Buddhism). Eventually I was left with nothing. All my most basic beliefs had been laid waste, shown to be inadequate and false. He then asked me to take for granted

Nothing. And he showed that once Nothing was granted, Being followed from that, because this Nothing was. It had Being, the Being of Nothing. So Being and Nothing were one and the same. Yet they were not the same, because they had two different names. So what was true was the movement of Being into Nothing and Nothing into Being, indefinitely. But that brought into being a new category, Becoming. And so, by carrying on like that, all the categories of logic came into existence one by one, until the whole of it was complete. And then... but to go on would involve describing the whole dialectical logic of Hegel. It was a revelation, and an enormous experience for me. I went on to study Hegel for the next fifty years.

Now of course this was not exactly a mystical experience, but it introduced me to dialectical thinking, and I learned later that dialectical thinking was the mode of thought which fitted best with the mystical realms (Rowan 2000). But it took a quite different experience to make this link. Move forward to 1967, when I was given what I believe to have been about 400 mcg of LSD. Both set and setting were good. At one point I remember having a sense of strands of force connecting everything and everybody in the universe. I even seemed to see and hear them criss-crossing the room. This connection made everything into parts of a whole. It was somehow all one. And this seemed to be the truth. It was as if I had now seen the truth, and all other versions were lesser and less adequate. Things I had read now made a lot more sense. Zen Buddhism was also around at the time (Reps 1961), and I liked that a lot. I also read Evelyn Underhill (1995), and was very interested in that. I had also read Maslow (1970), and labelled this episode as a peak experience.

One of the key ideas which has made the idea of the transpersonal more acceptable is the notion of the peak experience. If the statistics are right (Hay 1990)

well over half of educated people will have had at least one peak experience in their lives.

The great writer about peak experiences is of course Abraham Maslow, who in various books over the years has explained what they are and how they feel and what they mean. Here is a typical example, taken from the Hay book just mentioned:

I was walking across a field turning my head to admire the Western sky and looking at a line of pine trees appearing as black velvet against a pink backdrop, turning to duck egg blue/green overhead, as the sun set. Then it happened. It was as if a switch marked 'ego' was suddenly switched off. Consciousness expanded to include, be, the previously observed. 'I' was the sunset and there was no 'I' experiencing 'it'. No more observer and observed. At the same time – eternity was 'born'. There was no past, no future, just an eternal now... then I returned completely to normal consciousness finding myself still walking across the field, in time, with a memory. (p.50)

It can be seen how this fits with Grof's suggestion that transpersonal experiences involve "an expansion or extension of consciousness beyond the usual ego boundaries and beyond the limitations of time and/or space." (Grof 1979, p.155)

## THE SUBTLE

So it is often through peak experiences that we get glimpses of the world of soul or spirit. In that sense they could also be described as 'peek' experiences. We can then either ignore them or make much of them, take them as meaningful or meaningless, be proud or ashamed of them, treat them in any way we wish. But they are hard to forget. An experience like the one above can act as a glimpse of a state of consciousness which a mystic might cultivate. Now it is very important to

understand this idea of a glimpse, and Anthony and his colleagues help us to appreciate this:

The term 'glimpse experience', which we are introducing in this volume, is intended specifically to be a counter-inflationary term, emphasizing that the great majority of mystical or transpersonal experiences are only temporary glimpses beyond mundane ego-consciousness and do not involve true transformation to a more transcendent, encompassing state... Glimpse experience... can be protransformative and can foster spiritual development in many ways, provided there is an awareness that the glimpse is relative and not absolute, initiatory and not conclusive, temporary and not permanent.

(Anthony et al 1987, p.188)

It is difficult to get the right balance between overvaluing the transpersonal and undervaluing it. In a fascinating paper, Davis, Lockwood & Wright (1991) found that the most common reasons why people often did not report or even refer to their own peak experiences were: (a) that they were special, intimate and personal experiences which they wanted to keep for themselves; (b) that they might be devalued or put down; and (c) that they were too difficult to describe in words.

The person who has done most to put the peak experience on the map is Abraham Maslow, so let us see that he says about them.

All peak experiences may be fruitfully understood as completions-of-the-act... or as the Gestalt psychologists' closure, or on the paradigm of the Reichian type of complete orgasm, or as total discharge, catharsis, culmination, climax, consummation, emptying or finishing. (Maslow 1968, p.111)

Most of us have had a number of peak experiences, although we haven't always labelled them as such. One's reactions while watching a beautiful sunset or listening

to an especially moving piece of music can lead to peak experiences. According to Maslow, peak experiences tend to be triggered by intense, inspiring occurrences. "It looks as if any experience of real excellence, or real perfection... tends to produce a peak experience". (Maslow 1973, p.175) The lives of most people are filled with long periods of relative inattentiveness, lack of involvement or even boredom. In contrast, in their broadest sense, peak experiences are those moments when we become deeply involved in, excited by and absorbed in the world.

This can happen through very natural experiences, if we will let it happen. Tanzer (1967) found that childbirth could be a potent source of peak experiences, if the mother allowed it to be, and ways were found of teaching mothers how to have such experiences. Instead of having a painful and distressing time, these mothers often had "a great and mystical experience, a religious experience if you wish - an illumination, a revelation, an insight." (Maslow 1973, p.183)

It can happen in sport, in dance, in all kinds of body activities. But it can also happen in intellectual activities. Maslow talked with many great scientists about their work, and came to the conclusion that peak experiences were very important for the most creative type of scientist:

He lives for the moments of glory when a problem solves itself, when suddenly through a microscope he sees things in a very different way, the moments of revelation, of illumination, insight, understanding, ecstasy. These are vital for him. (Maslow 1973, p.185)

Of course, we have to allow this to happen. It is quite possible to push these experiences away, to deny them, to ignore them. I remember reading an article, in some publication of the Secular Society, which described someone's camping holiday. One day in the late afternoon, he cycled over the top of a hill and saw a

village in the valley below. At that moment the clouds opened, and a ray of sunshine hit the church and illuminated it. The whole village seemed lit up in a most extraordinary way, and gave shape to the whole valley. The author said that for a moment he was tempted to experience a feeling of awe, but he quickly decided that it was more profitable to think about his plans for where to stay the night. This is what Maslow calls a non-peaker.

The most powerful peak experiences are relatively rare. They have been portrayed by poets as moments of ecstasy (Laski 1961), by the religious as deep mystical experiences. For Maslow, the highest peaks include "feelings of limitless horizons opening to the the vision, the feeling of being simultaneously more powerful and also more helpless than one ever was before, the feeling of great ecstasy and wonder and awe, the loss of placing in time and space..." (Maslow 1970, p.164) This now ties in with our understanding of the transpersonal. We can say that a peak experience of this latter kind may give us a glimpse at least of the transpersonal realm.

There can be peak experiences in psychotherapy, usually but not always associated with catharsis. Here is one example of such an event:

In midsession, this 25-year-old single woman, after ventilating and experiencing numbness and tingling of her extremities, suddenly displayed signs of fear, crying out in horror, with her body attempting to move backward and away. Her hands attempted to cover her face and eyes, as though she did not want to see. When asked to report her experience, she described herself as being on the brink of a dark abyss, a black void which she felt was threatening and dangerous. She tried in vain to escape, to move away, but felt trapped, there being no place for her to go where she would not be faced

with this darkness. While describing this phenomenon, she was asked if this was a familiar place for her; she admitted to a feeling of familiarity with the sense of the experience, but not with the details. It was as though she knew that she always existed on the brink of this void, and she could describe many of her compulsive ways of avoiding it. Maintaining voice contact with the body worker, she was encouraged to examine that darkness and void as thoroughly as possible; this she did, descending slowly and carefully, as though climbing down a steep rock wall. When she reached an impasse where she could no longer find anything to hold onto, she was encouraged to have faith in herself and to jump. After a hesitant pause, she did so. Her face, wracked with fear and tension, suddenly shone with pleasure and brightness. Breathlessly, she reported herself flying, feeling free and expansive, full of pleasure about herself, her depths, and her heights. (Wong & McKeen 1980, p.306)

This seems quite a clear example of a peak experience, and it can be seen here how the action of the therapist, enabling and facilitating the experience, was of the utmost importance. Maslow went on to say that there could be plateau experiences, representing a new and more profound way of viewing and experiencing the world. This involves a fundamental change in attitude, a change that affects one's entire point of view and creates a new appreciation and intensified awareness of the world. We can then go on, as Wilber (2000) clarifies, to a change in consciousness such that the new level of consciousness becomes a realisation, a pattern that is now a constant part of us. It is important to realise, however, that this is not a settled permanent state - we still want to be able to have much more ordinary experiences as well - but rather a state which we can call on at any moment, in case of need.



The question has been raised as to whether peak experiences can be had to order, as it were, in an intentional way, so that we can enter what Wilber (2000) calls the Subtle state of consciousness. One of the group leaders in the 1970s used to promise a peak experience if you went on one of his weekends. It is easy to laugh at this, but how about the question of using LSD, mescaline, psilocybin or other hallucinogenic drugs? Pahnke (1971) conducted an experiment using psilocybin along these lines. It was carefully arranged as a double-blind experiment, where matched pairs of volunteers were given tablets before a Good Friday event. Half of these people were given psilocybin, and half were given a placebo (actually nicotinic acid). Nobody knew which member of the pair had been given which drug until the codes were translated later. The results were striking: eight out of the ten young men who had the hallucinogenic drug had mystical experiences, as assessed by an instrument derived from classic literature on mysticism. None of the control group had anything like the same depth of experience.

Interestingly enough a paper was published twenty-five years later which was based on interviews with those who had taken part. It was found that the mystical experiences were still remembered, still valued, and had had a marked effect on the person's life.

Each of the psilocybin subjects felt that the experience had significantly affected his life in a positive way and expressed appreciation for having participated in the experiment. Most of the effects discussed in the long-term follow-up interviews centered around enhanced appreciation of life and of nature, deepened sense of joy, deepened commitment to the Christian ministry or to whatever other vocations the subjects chose, enhanced appreciation of unusual experiences and emotions, increased tolerance of

other religious systems, deepened equanimity in the face of difficult life crises, and greater solidarity and identification with foreign peoples, minorities, women and nature. (Doblin 1991, p.14)

This is a remarkable finding, and suggests that the panicky banning of all responsible research with such drugs was a mistake.

Equally powerful results may come out of near-death experiences. John Wren-Lewis describes a near-death experience which he had in Thailand, which resulted in a state of consciousness described like this:

I simply entered - or rather, was - a timeless, spaceless void which in some indescribable way was total aliveness - an almost palpable blackness that was yet somehow radiant. Trying to find words for it afterwards, I recalled the mysterious line of Henry Vaughan's poem *The Night*: "There is in God (some say) a deep and dazzling darkness". (Wren-Lewis 1991, p.5)

In his case, too, this did not go away. It seemed to be a state which resided somewhere at the back of his head, and could be called on at any moment.

The sense of awe-full wonder has at the same time a feeling of utter obviousness and ordinariness, as if the marvel of "everything-coming-into-being-continuously-from-the-Great-Dark" were no more and no less than "just the way things are". From this perspective, the term altered state of consciousness would be a complete misnomer, for the state is one of complete normality. It seems, rather, as if my earlier state, so-called "ordinary" human consciousness, represents the real alteration - a deviation from the plain norm, a kind of blinkered or clouded condition wherein the bodymind has the absurd illusion that it is somehow a separate individual entity over against everything else. (Wren-Lewis 1991, p.6)

This now begins to sound like an advanced spiritual stage of development, because there are no symbols or images to speak of. I suspect that the reason why the experience of Wren-Lewis was so profound and long-lasting was because of the excellent preparations he had already put in, in terms of self-development and self-awareness. (He had done group work, therapy, meditation and prayer.) As Hegel (1974) puts it rather well, I think:

This process followed by self-producing Spirit, this path taken by it, includes distinct moments; but the path is not as yet the goal, and Spirit does not reach the goal without having traversed the path. It is not originally at the goal; even what is most perfect must traverse the path to the goal in order to attain it.

(Philosophy of Religion, Vol.1, p.75)

It seems to be true that traumatic experiences can provide the final push to a process which is hanging fire. This is perhaps why catharsis is used in so many therapies, ancient and modern. I had an example in my own work with a client recently, where he had been doing quite well over a period of some months, but could not seem to get any further. Then one day he was in a car accident, where he nearly died: and afterwards he felt quite different, as if he knew who he was and what he was about. It was the breakthrough we had been waiting for, and it worked admirably. We parted company soon after that, so I do not know how long it lasted.

It would of course be a mistake to think that the transpersonal was just about altered states of consciousness. Jorge Ferrer (2000) has warned against this error quite tellingly, pointing out for example that there can be a subtle Cartesianism in focusing on the experiencing subject. It can turn into a subject-object way of thinking and talking which does not do justice to the participatory nature of all experience.

He also argues that there is a kind of narcissism which may afflict those who think and speak in terms of personal experiences of the transpersonal. Such experiences can be seen as MY experiences – that is, they are owned by an ego which is taken for granted. Such a personal ownership can then result in a kind of pride. Ferrer argues that the object of transpersonal work is not to have such experiences (whether 'peak' or not), but rather "to stabilize spiritual consciousness, live a spiritual life and transform the world accordingly." (p.221)

This makes sense, and in my own researches into the transpersonal I was careful to learn the ropes of Subtle consciousness in a Wiccan group, which was organized along educational lines. I learned about the four directions, the eight great festivals of the Pagan year, and the great insights into gender relationships which come with this territory. I learned great respect for archetypes, deity figures and mythological investigations. So when I had transpersonal experiences, I was able to share them with the group and in return benefit from sharing in their experiences too. This part of my life was written up in my book *The Horned God* (1987).

I found that I could apply the knowledge and insight thus obtained in my work as a therapist, and set up, with Jocelyn Chaplin, the Serpent Institute, where we taught students counselling and psychotherapy using a framework of Goddess spirituality. And the experience gained there resulted in the publication of my (1993) book *The Transpersonal: Psychotherapy and Counseling*, which has now gone into a second edition.

## THE WILBER MODEL

The transpersonal is in general the realm of spirituality. But it attempts to be more precise and more clearly defined than the term 'spirituality' allows. The major

theorist on whom I wish to rely in this area is Ken Wilber, who takes a very wide-ranging view of the matter, based on evolutionary ideas. In other words, his is a developmental model. Ken Wilber is highly respected in the transpersonal psychology community, and has received a special award from the Association for Transpersonal Psychology. He is often referred to in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, and his work is fully discussed by experts in the field in the book edited by Donald Rothberg & Sean Kelly (Rothberg & Kelly 1998).

The reason why this approach seems adequate to me is that on the one hand it is well founded on copious research, and on the other it fits very well with my own experience in that field.

This research is most clearly delineated in his book *Integral Psychology*, published in 2000 (see Appendix A). Wilber searched through the world literature on the evolutionary stages of growth in consciousness, and found eighty-two thinkers who covered various sections of the field. He then aligned these in relation to one another to see how well or badly they fitted. We already know from many studies of developmental psychology (Craig 1992) that there is a great deal of agreement on the early stages, and that the various studies of child development agree well with one another. It is also well known that studies of adult development agree with each other very well: Maslow (1987) on levels of motivation, Loevinger (1976) on levels of ego development and Kohlberg (1981) on levels of moral development offer closely similar sets of stages, for example, and there are many others. What Wilber found was that there was also a very high degree of agreement about the further stages of development among those who had studied it. Some of these were from the West, and some from the East; some were contemporary, some older and some were ancient; some of them knew about the others, and some did not. Some of them only

covered certain restricted stages of development, and some tried to cover the whole gamut. By putting all this together, in 22 pages of charts, Wilber (2000) found that not only was there a strong sense of agreement, there was also a general conformity to a recurring theme in world literature, which is called the Great Chain of Being (Lovejoy 1964/1936), or as Wilber renames it, the Great Nest of Being. Appendix A consists of the first two pages of the charts.

This says that different levels of development are nested one within another. At each level the previous level is transcended but included. The familiar example is the levels of matter. Atoms are more complex than electrons, but include them. Molecules are more complex than atoms, but include them. Cells are more complex than molecules, but include them, and so forth. Similarly in the transpersonal, Wilber says that the Subtle level of consciousness development is more complex than the Centaur level, but includes it; the Causal level is more complex than the Subtle, but includes it; and the Nondual is more complex than the Causal, but includes it. All we need to know now is the nature of the Centaur, the Subtle, the Causal and the Nondual.

The Centaur (so called because of its emphasis on the unity of mind and body) is a stage of consciousness described by Maslow (1989) as the self-actualised person, by Loevinger (1976) as the autonomous and integrated person, and by Kohlberg (1981) as the universal ethical person. Jenny Wade (1996) usefully describes this level as the authentic stage of development, where the person acquires a real sense of knowing who they are. This is different from the previous stage, where we look to other people to define who we are, and need their confirmation and their support. It is sometimes called the centauric-existential stage of development (Wilber 1999, p.297), and Gebser (1985) calls it the integral-

aperspectival level. It is interesting that Buddhism, which many people rightly value in the transpersonal realm, has no place for this outlook, and simply lumps it with the previous level, which Wilber calls the Mental Ego or the Persona. It is true that the Centaur stage is so to speak on the edge between the personal and the transpersonal, and partakes somewhat of both. But all the authorities Wilber quotes do indeed have something to say about this stage of development.

However, the main level within the transpersonal which will be covered here is the Subtle, because that is the level on which it is easiest and most fruitful to conduct psychotherapy using personification. It is a form of spirituality where we approach the divine (the sacred, the numinous, the holy) through symbols and images. James Hillman was one of the first to draw attention to the essential features of this level of work. "Here I am working toward a psychology of soul that is based in a psychology of image. Here I am suggesting both a *poetic basis of mind* and a psychology that starts neither in the physiology of the brain, the structure of language, the organization of society, nor the analysis of behavior, but in the processes of imagination." (Hillman 1975, p.xi) Here he is using the notion of soul (which he elsewhere calls psyche or anima) to unify a view of the world which is very different both from everyday consciousness and also from the consciousness of the Centaur. At the Centaur stage (as also at the Causal stage which we shall come to in due course) there is an emphasis on oneness: at the Subtle stage there is an emphasis on multiplicity – which of course fits well with the idea of subpersonalities. And because at the level of the Subtle there is an awareness of the sacred, Hillman finds it very natural to offer the idea of a polytheistic psychology. "*Polytheistic psychology refers to the inherent dissociability of the psyche and the location of consciousness in*

*multiple figures and centers.*" (Hillman 1975, p26 – italics in original). The connection with everyday multiplicity in the person is easy to see.

At the Subtle level the *type of thinking* changes again. At the Centaur level we started to think dialectically (Rowan 2000): this is the type of thought which Wilber also calls 'vision–logic'. "Vision–logic can hold in mind contradictions, it can unify opposites, it is dialectical and nonlinear, and it weaves together what otherwise appear to be incompatible notions, as long as they relate together in the new and higher holon, *negated* in their partiality but *preserved* in their positive contributions." (Wilber 1995, p.185). At the Subtle level we still think dialectically, but we also rely much more than at any previous stage on intuition. Rachel Charles (2004) has argued that intuition is extremely important in therapy, and has made a study of this in which she found that at the Subtle level it was constant and reliable, rather than sporadic and chancy. What this means is that the type of logic found at the Mental Ego level (Aristotelian, Newtonian, Boolean, etc.), which often speaks of 'Laws of Thought' as if there were no alternatives, is inadequate at the Subtle level. This means, for example, that the question "Is it true?" must often be replaced with the question "What effects did it have?" The reason why this is important is that people at this level often speak of mythological beings or archetypes as if they were real and present: angels, fairies, devas and other nature spirits, and so forth, as William Bloom (1998) has well explained. It can perhaps now be seen more easily why this is so useful in psychotherapy – there is no limit to the empathy one can have with a client, even if they come out with statements which might otherwise appear outrageous. So the clinical interface with the forms of logic which we use becomes an important feature of our approach in this document.



This is what makes the Subtle so useful in transcultural work. Until recently, this was an uncharted area, but now the excellent book by Fukuyama and Sevig (1999) is available to help us with a multitude of research studies and a great deal of insight. It is a pity that they use the word spirituality rather than the word transpersonal, but that is one of the hazards of this whole field – the lack of agreement on terms. Just as there are many ways of talking about subpersonalities, so in a similar way there are many ways of talking about the spiritual, the divine, the numinous, the sacred, the transpersonal. Fukuyama and Sevig devote some attention to the schema called OTAID, which stands for Optimal Theory Applied to Identity Development, based on an Afrocentric perspective. They argue that the process of going through the postulated six stages of development "is universal, though it may be manifested differently based on the cultural context in which it is experienced and lived". (p.52) They argue that one of the benefits of this schema is that it "incorporates the concept of multiple identities and oppressions in its formulations". (p.53) They then link this with various mystical traditions, which turn out to involve descriptions of very similar stages of development. They argue that "soul awakening" is a natural process, though it may come at different ages.

The implications of this for therapy are succinctly outlined in a set of points derived from a summit meeting sponsored by ASERVIC (the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counselling) in 1995. They go as follows:

*The professional counsellor will be able to:*

1. *explain the relationship between spiritual, religious and transpersonal phenomena, including similarities between the three types of phenomena;*
2. *describe spiritual, religious and transpersonal beliefs and practices from the perspective of diversity;*

3. *engage in self-exploration of one's religious, spiritual and/or transpersonal beliefs to foster self-understanding and acceptance of one's belief system;*
4. *describe one's religious, spiritual and/or transpersonal belief system;*
5. *explain one or two models of human religious, spiritual and transpersonal development across the lifespan;*
6. *demonstrate empathy for understanding a variety of religious, spiritual and transpersonal communication;*
7. *identify limits to one's tolerance of religious, spiritual and/or transpersonal phenomena and in case of intolerance, demonstrate appropriate referral skills and generate possible referral sources;*
8. *assess the relevance of the religious, spiritual and/or transpersonal domains in the client's therapeutic issues;*
9. *be receptive to, invite and/or avoid religious, spiritual and transpersonal material in the counselling process as it befits each client's expressed preferences when it is relevant for counselling; and*
10. *use a client's religious, spiritual or transpersonal beliefs in the pursuit of the client's therapeutic goals as befits the client's expressed preferences, or admit inability to do so in such a way that honours the client. (p.67)*

It is easy to see the well developed and quite sophisticated values behind such prescriptions. The authors emphasise that these points are expected to be part of an ongoing process of becoming culturally skilled, which never reaches an end point – it is a constant learning process.

I have laboured the point because with something like the Subtle level of consciousness, it is so different from the everyday type of thinking that it is sometimes tempting to think of it as unrealistic or otherworldly. The fact that it is so

relevant to multicultural work is a corrective to this, as is the deep work of Kate Maguire (2001) with survivors of torture and extreme experiences.

Other aspects of the Subtle which are commonly experienced are creativity, intuition and the imaginal world. Certain aspects of the Subtle are often used in therapy, such as active imagination, personal mythology, visualisation, guided fantasy, dreamwork and meditation (Rowan 2005a). Wilber has taken great care to distinguish such Subtle-level phenomena from the magic-mythic level of consciousness with which they are often confused. He has for this purpose introduced the notion of the Pre/Trans Fallacy (PTF) first described in his 1983b book. This says that historically different authorities have accidentally or deliberately mixed up these two very different types of thinking, and that this is but one example of a general tendency to reduce the transpersonal to the prepersonal, or conversely to inflate the prepersonal to the transpersonal. Figure 1 (p.74) shows how many confusions there can be, and clarifies how this works in practice.

Moving on now, much more briefly, to the Causal stage of psychospiritual development, this is the type of mystical thinking where we let go of all symbols and images, all concepts and labels, and are alone in the deep water of spirituality. This is the aspect of the transpersonal which is most cultivated in Buddhism (e.g. Kapleau 1967) and in Yoga (e.g. Feuerstein 1989).

## THE CAUSAL

Early in the 1990s I was in therapy with Ian Gordon-Brown, the founder of the Centre for Transpersonal Psychology, which later became a member of the UK Council for Psychotherapy. At a certain point I said that I had done ten years of work exploring the Subtle realms, and that Wilber (1980) had found in his work that the

next main way—station on the psychospiritual path was the Causal. This is the level of the Transpersonal where we give up all the symbols and images which were so important and useful at the Subtle and embark on the deep ocean of spirituality, where there are no signposts and no landmarks. Should I not now move on to this part of the way, and if so how? Ian explained to me that the only thing standing in the way was my contractions. 'Contractions' is a word taken from Eastern philosophy, and used by Wilber to mean the internal objections and fears that stood in the way of opening up to the deeper mystical states of being. So nothing was necessary other than to drop my assumptions that it was difficult. The sense of freedom which resulted was remarkable.

I started to use my morning meditation sessions (which had begun in 1981) for exploration of the Causal. I found that it was easier than I thought. I also engaged in certain training sessions with the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order in Bethnal Green, the Vipassana workshops of Goenka in Herefordshire, the Ch'an workshops of John Crook in Wales, and so forth. This work resulted in the publication of an Afterword to my Transpersonal book, which was written in 1996 and circulated privately to a number of people and published in 2002 in a reprint of the book itself. It criticised the book for focusing too much on the Subtle, as if that were all there were to the Transpersonal.

But it was not until 2003 that I presented my paper "Is it possible to work at the Causal level in therapy?" at the annual conference of the BPS Transpersonal Psychology Section, and followed it up by presenting an experiential workshop at the same conference where I demonstrated this level of work (Rowan 2005c). An expanded version now forms part of the second edition of my book on the transpersonal in therapy.

I have also been using these insights in a series of workshops presented in 2004 and 2005, in which I am teaching therapists to work at the Subtle and the Causal levels. This turns out to be surprisingly productive and exciting. I say surprisingly because I used to say it was impossible to work at the Causal level in therapy, for the simple reason that at that level there are no problems: and clients coming for therapy normally want the therapist to take their problems seriously. However, what I found was that when faced with the emptiness of the Causal, some clients took the opportunity to abandon their problems altogether – to see through them instead of wrestling with them. Like everything in therapy, the client has to be ready for this, but some clients are indeed ready in this way, as other have found (Nandi 2005, Prendergast et al 2003).

So the second edition of my book takes a step forward from the first edition, and probes further into the transpersonal realm. And my meditation has taken a further step again, moving on from the Causal to the Nondual, which Wilber (2000) says is a different and more advanced stage. I am still exploring this, but it is my opinion already that it is possible to work at the Nondual level in psychotherapy. This too features in the second edition of my book.

#### 4. BRINGING THE TWO TOGETHER

Having established that there are two distinct realms involved here – subpersonalities in one book and the transpersonal in the other – it is now necessary to show how the two works relate to each other.

##### RESEARCH AIMS

In bringing these two streams together, the internal dialogue and the transpersonal, it was necessary to arrive at some precise aims. Otherwise the interest becomes rather diffuse and hard to pin down. We have already found that it is possible to treat subpersonalities (under whatever label) by personifying them and dialoguing with them in therapy. We also noted that we can speak of other entities with such titles as Mental Ego, Centaur (or authentic self), Subtle Self (or soul), Causal Self (or spirit) and Nondual (Wilber 2000). These are normally not thought of as subpersonalities, but rather as expressions of spirituality, and little attempt has been made in the past to personify them. But it now seems as though it is possible to assume or pretend that they can be personified.

The research questions, then, seem to be these:

1. In order to discover whether these ideas are relevant to therapy, it is necessary to find out whether therapists can enter into or adopt these states of consciousness. We therefore need to explore specific methods of accessing them. How easy or difficult is this in practice? Is special training needed for the task?
2. If we take this step, is it possible then to dialogue with these other entities, and are the results that emerge relevant to psychotherapy?

What we have here, then, is a research effort extending over a period of thirty years or more, but more intensively in the last five. This is considerably more than is usually involved in a PhD by the conventional route. It speaks of a sustained interest in the two fields involved, and a sustained effort to do justice to the issues involved.

## RESEARCH METHOD

In researching these questions the method had to be mainly qualitative. There are three reasons for this: (a) all of them involve studying changes in consciousness, in quite a subtle way; (b) all of them therefore involve a great deal of trust between the main researcher and the other participants; (c) when we come to answering them, we really do become co-researchers.

In recent years there has been a great increase in the attention paid to qualitative research. Since the early days of what we then called New Paradigm Research (Reason & Rowan 1981) there has been quite an explosion of work in this area. In 1995 the journal *Qualitative Inquiry* was founded, and in 1996 the great handbook appeared – now in its second edition – (Denzin & Lincoln 2000), and the more recent handbook (Reason & Bradbury 2001) which has very impressive discussions of the philosophy of science. It covers, for example, the characteristics of action research, the linguistic turn, the participatory worldview, practical being and acting, the nature of knowing, the relational ecological form, and the question of purpose and meaning. The book by John Heron which appeared about the same time (Heron 1996) emphasises the need for making personal sense of the research. In 2005 the British Psychological Society created a Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section, which is a very significant move for an organization which has been so strongly devoted to objective empirical methods.

Qualitative research does not adopt the philosophy of empirical objectivity, relying more on a disciplined subjectivity. This whole question is discussed very well by Donna Mertens (1998), who distinguishes between (a) positivism and post-positivism; (b) the interpretative/constructivist paradigm; and (c) the emancipatory paradigm, and shows how they fit together. This is relevant to the present work, because psychotherapy too relies on a disciplined subjectivity. Qualitative research, like its quantitative cousin, relies on the process of the standard research cycle (Rowan 2001) which runs from work in the field to the gathering of information to the construction of a research plan to the conduct of the research to the analysis of the data to the communication of the results and back to work in the field.

In 1998 appeared two books which showed that transpersonal research is possible. The Braud & Anderson (1998) book has a number of examples of different ways of conducting such research, such as integral inquiry, intuitive inquiry, phenomenological inquiry, organic research, reflexive research and feminist inquiry. The Bentz & Shapiro (1998) book shows that a specifically Buddhist approach works well in this area. The emphasis here is on collaboration between the main researcher and the other participants, and the dropping of some of the barriers that normally separate researcher and researched. My own chapter (Rowan 1998) showed how this related to transpersonal work generally.

In the present case, as can be seen in the relevant sections, much of my research was done on myself. I involved other people, but some of the prime results were only to be found in my own consciousness. Where possible I then checked my experience with others, as for example when I tested my own mystical experience of the Causal Self, or what the Buddhists call *kensho*, by submitting myself to the judgement of the *roshi* at a retreat run by members of the Western Ch'an Federation.



Similarly, I put myself through an experience of Vipassana meditation at one of the Goenka retreats.

Experiences of subpersonalities are easier to come by, and I went to a number of workshops in this area, starting in 1972 and continuing throughout the 1970s. This enabled much checking, both of my own internal world and of those of others in the groups, through two-chair and empty chair work, and psychodrama. Psychodrama is of course one of the main sources of work with subpersonalities (Karp et al 1998). Of course the literature here is extensive, as I made clear in my own book on subpersonalities (1990) which put together a very large body of work from sixteen different schools of psychotherapy, and also brought together data from psychology and arguments from philosophy.

More recently Avants & Margolin (2004) have also been arguing that the soul (or what they call the spiritual self-schema) can be treated as a subpersonality, and this approach can be very successful in the treatment of addiction. It seems clear that the concept of a self-schema is becoming more popular now.

A whole well elaborated form of therapy has been launched by Jeffrey Young and his co-workers (Young et al 2003) under the title of Schema Therapy: "Patients learn to conduct dialogues between their 'schema side' and their 'healthy side'. Adapting the Gestalt 'empty chair' technique, the therapist instructs patients to switch chairs as they play the two sides: In one chair they play the schema side, in the other they play the healthy side." (p.100)

Having taken all this into account, my own research is based on the idea of crystallization, which is a further development of the idea of triangulation.

Triangulation involves checking information that has been collected from different sources for consistency of evidence. Following in part Mannheim (1936), Denzin

argued that 'sociology's empirical reality is a reality of competing definitions, attitudes and personal values' (1970, p.300) and concluded that multiple methods and theoretical approaches must be used. Four basic triangulations were proposed by him:

1. Data with respect to time, place, person and level.
2. Between multiple observers of the same phenomenon.
3. Between multiple theoretical perspectives with respect to the same set of objects.
4. Methodological triangulation.

Later work added some further forms to this. Carol Tindall (1994) writes of data triangulation, investigator triangulation, method triangulation, theoretical triangulation and levels of triangulation. All these are helps to the pursuit of validity.

However, more recent work by Laurel Richardson and others has cast doubt on the adequacy of triangulation and have also questioned the whole idea of validity. The idea of validation suggests that there is some final truth out there (the Myth of the Given, as it has been called), and that the job of research is to discover it. She puts forward instead the notion of crystallization, where there is no end to the points of view: "crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know." (Richardson 2000, p.934) This is much more the view taken here: it seems obvious that there is a great deal still to be discovered in the realm of mysticism, and that we are nowhere near coming to a final conclusion.

The whole thrust of recent philosophy of science, as Ferrer (2002) has neatly summarised, comes out against what he calls the Myth of the Given (Sellars 1963)

and also the Myth of the Framework (Popper 1994): both of these assume that there is a reality out there which is independent of our imaginings and our language. More recent thinking urges that our imaginings and our language help to shape reality for us. To believe that our job is to delineate reality is to fall for a myth.

In the present case, whether we call it triangulation or crystallization, my approach took the form of including and comparing data from workshops where people explored their own experience, my own personal experience, and study of the literature. These three sources are woven together to make the whole, in the ways described below.

## **DIALOGICAL SELF RESEARCH**

Following on from my earlier investigations into subpersonalities and the transpersonal, I had pursued the idea that perhaps the different levels could speak to one another. This was a sort of game, where I used two-chair work in a new way to explore various levels of consciousness. Two-chair work is a very flexible way of working, as Kellogg (2004) has well explained, and is used by several different schools of therapy to resolve issues concerning conflicting subpersonalities or schemas. It simply consists in setting up a dialogue between different parts of the person which are in conflict or which need to set up better relationships between them

In deciding whether these different levels of consciousness were accessible at will, I adopted a two-stage process. The first stage is to access the state of consciousness through the appropriate kind of initiation. In the case of the Mental Ego, this is the process of normal education, where we are initiated into the common beliefs of our culture. In the case of the Authentic Self or Centaur, the method of initiation is mostly through the process of counselling or psychotherapy, or any other

process which enables us to deal with our Shadow material. At the end of such a process, we are able to drop most of our defences, as well as our neediness. In the case of the Subtle Self, the most effective type of initiation seems to be through a group which uses ritual to access Subtle states of consciousness, and then encourages the person to study and explore further in a committed way. In the case of the Causal self or spirit, the most useful path of initiation seems to be meditation. Of course meditation is not just one thing: there are many forms of it; but they all seem able to lead into this state of consciousness, which is often described in the literature of mysticism (see Rowan 2005a, Chapter 9).

Once one has had the initiation, sufficient to at least have had some glimpses of the level of consciousness involved, it is possible to access that level by remembering the times when one has had the genuine experience. The general rule is: "States are free: stages have to be earned." In other words, it is relatively easy to access the state of consciousness, without necessarily having reached that stage of consciousness in any full or consistent way.

One of the key things about two-chair work is that the client has to enter fully and completely into both parts. As Johnson (1986) has urged, there must be no sense of pretence about it. So what happens if we set up a dialogue between the Mental Ego level of consciousness (see Appendix A for fuller details about each of these levels of consciousness) and the Centaur level?

My first effort in this direction was to set up a dialogue between that part of myself that I labelled as the Mental Ego, and that other part of myself which I labelled as the Centaur (Wilber 2000) or authentic self. Some interesting contrasts emerged, and after several revisions (derived from further movements around the research cycle) they came out as shown in Table 2, Appendix C.

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This seemed to make sense in terms of the other literature on the subject, some of which is summarised in Rowan & Jacobs (2002). It felt as if I was on the right lines. But of course it would be even better if it could be independently checked. By coincidence, I was reading a book soon after, about Person-Centred Therapy, in which there was a chapter on empathy which made this point: "When we are in the Me self-state we see ourselves as objects. In the statement 'Something happened to me', one sees oneself as the object of what happened. In the I self-state, the self as agent is expressed in the statement 'I did X'. Here one sees oneself as the *initiating actor*." The author followed this with table 3 in Appendix C.

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It can be seen from the table how similar this set of contrasts is to the one which I had discovered. This encouraged me to think that I was not alone, that my work had been independently validated by someone else in a remarkable way. Fred Zimring is of course a well known member of the humanistic community, and before his death in 2000 went back and forth between the USA and his native country of Austria.

So I proceeded with the next investigation, into the differences between the Centaur level and the Subtle level of consciousness (Wilber 2000) with greater confidence. Indeed this procedure had been suggested before by Will Parfitt. His (1990) book has on page 122 details of an exercise which is quite parallel to the one suggested here: of initiating a dialogue with one's own soul. And the classic book by

Barbara Hannah (1981) tells us that one of the oldest documents of Ancient Egypt is the dialogue of a suicidal man with his soul. When I tried it in my own case, and then in workshops, the results came out as shown in Table 4, Appendix C.

One participant in a workshop said:

*My 'conversation' did not proceed fluently. At least as dialogue it did not. As a monologue it proceeded apace. My authentic self, confident in its established position as the way to be was strong in its competence and advantages. My subtle self, while feeling that it should be more developed after all its years of Christian nurturing, found itself surprisingly mute and uncertain of who it was.*

*Comparing our experiences in pairs I had no problem in locating myself on the psychospiritual map and identifying the focus of my growth as translation within the level of the authentic self. The weak voice of my subtle self had surprised me as it had the Buddhist with whom I was comparing notes. Perhaps we were not as spiritually developed as we might have thought.*

This shows the paradox inherent in this sort of work. On the one hand the task seems easy and straightforward, but on the other hand there may be unexpected difficulties and resistances.

I have not as yet come across anyone else who has repeated this work, so it stands on its own at the moment as an example of work in dialogical self research. But I think that to anyone familiar with these states – and I have shared this chart with a number of such people – it does make sense and in fact is seen as quite illuminating and useful in working with such states of consciousness.

This emboldened me to proceed with the next stage, comparing the Subtle state of consciousness with the Causal (Wilber 2000). Here we are dealing with more rarefied matters, which are outside the experience of many people, but I have found that many people have had glimpses of these realms, and such glimpses are very important in psychospiritual development (Anthony et al 1987). When I investigated this contrast, it came out as shown in Table 5 of Appendix C.

Again we can look at the experience of a participant:

The causal self includes the following characteristics: no interest in symbols, no interest in gender, sees through distinctions between unity and diversity, paradox runs through everything, one with nature, no fear because nothing is alien. It was the voice of this self that indulged its opportunity to speak. Full of discontent at being discounted and unappreciated and whose only consolation seemed to be biding its time until it would come into its own in eternity. I was both surprised and amused at the strength of feeling.

If I describe this as the result of research, what kind of research is this? It obviously uses and builds on the process of meditation. Meditation has been much studied, and the classics are Naranjo & Ornstein (1976), Goleman (1978) and perhaps LeShan (1989). More recent thought and findings can be found in Welwood (2001) and Sheng Yen (2002). Through meditation I come into contact with states of consciousness which at first I cannot hold on to at all: they are of the nature of glimpses or peak experiences (Maslow 1973). But if I persevere, they become plateau experiences, which I can hold on to for a few minutes, or an hour or two. And if I persevere further, they became states of consciousness which I can access at any time, because they have become part of me, fully owned and acknowledged

as such. This is the process described by Wilber (2000) as the standard process of psychospiritual development. What I am doing here is to transcribe the results of such experiences, in line with our original research hypotheses, so that others can compare their own experiences and comment on their similarity or otherwise. At a number of workshops now the participants have verified that the contrasts correspond with their experience. This was not only at the level of verbal agreement, but at the level of action in the world, through practice sessions of counselling.

This encouraged me to persevere still further. In my meditation I had been pursuing the causal state of consciousness for the ten years from 1991 to 2001, and seemed to have quite a good grasp of it, as checked out for example in the Ch'an Buddhist retreat mentioned earlier. So in 2001 I set myself to explore the Nondual state of consciousness (Wilber 2000), which is supposed to succeed the Causal. To my delight, this turned out to be a very productive move, and I quickly started to get the hang of the difference between this and the Causal. And in 2004 I began to demonstrate work at this level in a psychotherapy context. What emerged from all this was another set of contrasts, as can be seen in Table 6 of Appendix C.

Here we are going into territory which is little explored, and I have found few people ready to confirm or deny these contrasts. Nevertheless, they were produced in the same way as the others, and have at least the merit of being checkable by other investigators.

The conclusion to all this is that I have developed considerably as a researcher over the period of the research. The work I am doing now is unique and goes into areas which others have not ventured into. I feel humble and privileged to have been allowed to do so.



It also now seems as though what I have done links in with other work in the field of psychotherapy, and offers a way in which this other work could be developed. these include, but are not restricted to:

- The new and philosophically very interesting work of the dialogical school, as for example Hermans & Dimaggio (2004).
- The assimilation model of William Stiles and his co-workers (Stiles et al 1992)
- The very similar line taken by Honos-Webb and her colleagues (Honos-Webb et al 1999).
- The somewhat similar approach of Osatuke et al (2005) which is now appearing.
- The 3-S model of Avants & Margolin (2004) already mentioned.
- The recent work in schema therapy of Jeffrey Young and his co-workers (Young et al 2003) with its very well worked out typology of possible schemas.
- The whole growing field of narrative therapy (McLeod 1997) which encourages the personification of problems, often along the lines suggested by Michael White and David Epston (1990).

None of these people seem to know about each other, and there is a great work of integration to be done if they are to learn from each other. My own work seems to take all this work forward in a way which constitutes a significant and original contribution to knowledge.

With the dialogical approach of Hermans and his co-workers it builds upon the notion of a continuing dialogue going on within the person, which can be drawn upon and extended in therapy. With the assimilation theory of Stiles and his colleagues it takes for granted that there is more than one system operating within the person, and that different selves emerge in different contexts at different time. With the schema therapy of Young and his co-authors it assumes that it is always possible to set up

dialogues between different self -schemas within the person. With the work of White & Epston it encourages the use of stories which turn problems into persons. With the work of Avants & Margolin it brings in the possibility of dialogue with the spiritual self-schema, otherwise known as the soul or the higher self, etc.

However, my work lays more stress on the transpersonal than any of these. It firmly asserts the possibility of contacting not only the subtle self (soul, etc.) but also the causal self, often known by such names as the All-Self, the *shunyata*, the Spirit. As we have seen above, it is even possible to contact and have dialogues with the Nondual, and this goes considerably further than any previous approach to therapy.

So the work reported in the present document, particularly as brought together over the years since 1993, represents a more focused attempt to make real progress in the therapeutic field. Following the research aims detailed earlier, it has taken the issues of dialogue and of the transpersonal forward into a number of publications now beginning to appear.

If we compare the early work represented in Appendix B with the present position, it can easily be seen how the basic approach has benefited from the recognition of the transpersonal element, which was not present in the early days.

So what we have now is an approach to psychotherapy which relates to humanistic methods, and also to narrative methods, in a very direct way, but takes them on to an additional level of consciousness. It relates to psychoanalysis by following the suggestion of Ken Wilber (1980) that there is not just one unconscious but five: the ground unconscious, the archaic unconscious, the submergent unconscious, the embedded unconscious, and the emergent unconscious. It is only the transpersonal approach that recognises and does justice to the emergent unconscious, yet if we want to do justice to the spiritual power of the unconscious we

have to take all this into account. It relates to cognitive-behavioural therapy by underlining and building on the recent discoveries in that discipline about mindfulness (Allen & Knight 2005) and about schemas (Young et al 2003) . Mindfulness can take us into the realm of the transpersonal, and schemas can take us into the realm of subpersonalities. What we have in the present document, therefore, has something to contribute in each of these existing areas of work.

## 5 LIMITATIONS OF THE WORK

Although, as already explained, the personal approach is justified, the limitations of this research are obvious. Just one approach to the transpersonal has been adopted: that of Ken Wilber. There are plenty of other approaches, such as those of Michael Washburn (1995), Stanislav Grof (1992) and Andrew Rawlinson (2000), and of course the older and perhaps better known approaches of Evelyn Underhill (1995), William James (1960), R C Zaehner (1961), F C Happold (1970) and W T Stace (1960).

The reason why Ken Wilber has been chosen, rather than these others, is that he has a better understanding of psychotherapy than any of them. In 1981 he published *No Boundary*, which is all about the different levels on which one can conduct therapy, and in 1986 he brought out a more complete account of the pathology of these levels, giving far more detail. Supporting reasons have already been outlined: the fact that his approach is so well based in evidence from different cultures and different times; the fact that he is so well respected in the transpersonal community (as witness Rothberg & Kelly 1998, Visser 2003 and Reynolds 2004); the fact that he has continued to produce relevant work published on the internet ([www.wilber.shambhala.com](http://www.wilber.shambhala.com)) and so forth.

However, it must be admitted that this approach is certainly not the only one, and has been criticised from several different angles, for example by Michael Daniels (2003), Jorge Ferrer (2002) and Geoffrey Falk (2005). Daniels criticises Wilber for being too narrow, and says: "Wilber's suggestion that such a philosophy is 'perennial' is highly contentious. In practice his theory is based closely on Vedanta and Buddhism, and on the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo." Daniels is not the only

person to say this, but it is a serious misstatement. And it is a misstatement which devalues the range of the work which Wilber is considering when coming to his eventual conclusions.

One only has to take seriously the charts in the back of *Integral Psychology* to see that Wilber's theory of the transpersonal self is much more widely based than anyone would guess from reading Daniels. What he has done is to trawl through the world literature on levels of consciousness to discover what is common between them. His reasoning is simple: that which all or most agree on is common to them. From a number of independent sources, some based on personal experience (for that is relevant to mysticism), he built up a consistent story with some very well established way stations. We can then do justice to the range of different sources which he has considered and compared.

When we do this, we can see that none of the following authorities quoted by Wilber can be classified as coming from the traditions of Vedanta, Buddhism or Aurobindo: Plotinus, Stanislav Grof, the Kabbala, Jenny Wade, Michael Washburn, Rudolf Steiner, Hazrat Inayat Khan, Evelyn Underhill, Muhyiddin Ben 'Arabi, St Palamas, St Teresa, Chirban, the Pseudo Dionysus, St Gregory of Nyssa, and so on. Ken Wilber's own statement is: "I have often been accused of deriving this schema exclusively from Eastern sources, thus marginalizing (oh dear) Western traditions. This is untrue. For example, Evelyn Underhill, whose *Mysticism* is justly regarded as a classic overview of Western mystical traditions, concludes that spiritual experiences (as evidenced in the overall Western tradition) exist along a *developmental continuum* from 'nature mysticism' (union with the web of life) to 'metaphysical mysticism' (from archetypal illumination to formless absorption) to

'divine mysticism' (states of nondual union) – in other words, virtually identical to my scheme." (p.76 in Vol.8 of the Collected Works, 2000).

Ferrer (2002) also criticises Wilber for adopting the 'perennial philosophy'. The argument here is that mystics belong to various races and various times and various belief systems, and that it is wrong to lump them together as if they were all saying the same thing. This seems to me a very abstract critique (which again he is not the only one to use) because Wilber continually comes back to the question of experience: are the experiences similar or different? And it turns out that the more precisely the experiences are described, the more similar they seem to be.

And Wilber is very sophisticated in his use of the perennial philosophy. He says quite explicitly: "I will often refer to the perennial philosophy (and the Great Nest) as the 'wisdom of premodernity'." (Wilber 2000, p.9).

Ferrer (2002) also criticises the whole question of experience. He says that the transpersonal is not a matter of private experience, but is rather something participative, which depends on a whole climate and background. This is really quite a strange criticism, because many of the great mystics (such as Meister Eckhart) broke away from their parent belief system and relied more on their own experience than on the group from which they emerged. Mystics are not conformists, as the participative view would suggest.

Ferrer is of course a major critic of Wilber, as can be seen from the following quote:

The perennial vision suffers from several basic tensions and shortcomings. These include an a priori commitment to a nondual monistic metaphysics and an endorsement of objectivism and essentialism in knowledge claims about ultimate reality.... Wilber's structuralist account of the perennial philosophy is

subject to a number of problems and weaknesses, such as elevationism and essentialism, lack of structuralist validity, "bad" hermeneutics, and arbitrariness in the ranking of traditions. Taken together these claims and presuppositions not only predispose toward subtle forms of religious exclusivism and intolerance, but also hinder spiritual enquiry and limit the range of valid spiritual choices through which we can creatively participate in the Mystery out of which everything arises. (Ferrer 2002, p.110)

This sounds pretty damning, and these are by no means Ferrer's only criticisms of Wilber in particular and the perennial philosophy in general. But does this mean we have to abandon Wilber's model? I think not, for two reasons: firstly, Wilber has answered many of these criticisms in his book *Integral Psychology* (2000), which apparently Ferrer was not able to include; and secondly, Ferrer is not interested in psychotherapy. From the point of view of therapy, all we are saying is that Wilber's model is very helpful and immediately applicable. It is also perhaps worth remarking that although Ferrer is a respected figure in the transpersonal community, it is still the case that the majority of transpersonal writers (as Ferrer says himself) still do adhere to a more sophisticated version of the perennial philosophy. So while taking Ferrer seriously, his remarks are not enough to make us abandon the Wilber model.

Coming on now to Geoffrey Falk, whose critique of Wilber is more like a diatribe than like serious criticism, we find a number of criticisms which are hardly central: Wilber is accused of not doing justice to David Bohm, of getting some details about the theory of evolution wrong, of approving of certain mystics (such as Adi Da and Andrew Cohen) who have engaged in dubious practices, and so on. Falk applies the approach of The Great Randi and the Skeptical Inquirer to matters for which this approach is not suitable.

There is also the question of the selection of problems to research. Here the approach has been, all the time, to focus on the actual day to day work of the therapist. How can this approach help the therapist deal with clients in the most telling and appropriate way? The limitations on this relate to the qualitative nature of the work. In order to produce valid generalisations, a more quantitative approach would be necessary. Of course proper funding would be needed for that.

Another question that might be raised is that of validity. This is something which Peter Reason and I (1981) discussed rather thoroughly some time ago. We came to the conclusion that one of the main ways of achieving validity was to go round the research cycle several times, tightening up the criteria each time, so that in the end the conclusions would be well checked. In the present instance, not only have I been round the cycle myself many times, but others who have used the two chair method have written copiously about their results, as for example Elliott et al (1998). See also Heron & Reason (2001) for a more up to date discussion.

A question could be raised about the validity of dividing up the person in the way suggested. Spearman (1937) long ago produced a book dealing with this. He quotes or mentions Xenophanes, Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine, Busse, Stout, Drobisch, Wolff, Fries, Kant, Baldwin, T H Green, Hartmann, Clifford, Schuppe, Ardigò, Ward, Ebbinghaus, Sully, Lotze, Höffding, Spencer and Locke - all to say that Unity is very important or essential. With such a show of support, it seemed that that was really all there was to say about the matter.

Philosophically, it has long been argued by Kant (1933) that 'the original synthetic unity of apperception' requires that it be possible for the 'I think' to accompany everything which I represent to myself or others. He also called it 'the transcendental unity of self-consciousness' to emphasize that new knowledge could



emerge from it. . But all that this says is that I must have the sense of "I" in everything I do. We have already seen how this works in the case of subpersonalities - the sense of "I" just automatically migrates to and goes with that specific subpersonality which happens to be in charge at a given moment. We always feel that sense of "I", however bizarre our experience may be.

And we find, if we look at modern philosophy, that there have been a number of voices urging that multiplicity is OK and even normal. Philosophers such as Derek Parfit (1984) and Jonathan Glover (1988) have argued at some length that splits in consciousness are philosophically understandable and talking in such terms is defensible. So this seeming difficulty need not detain us.

### SPECIFIC ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

We said that there were two research questions, as follows:

1. In order to discover whether these ideas are relevant to therapy, it is necessary to find out whether therapists can enter into or adopt these states of consciousness. We therefore need to explore specific methods of accessing them. How easy or difficult is this in practice? Is special training needed for the task?
2. If we take this step, is it possible then to dialogue with these other entities, and are the results that emerge relevant to psychotherapy?

What we have found is that therapists can indeed enter into such states of consciousness, and that the most direct method of doing this is simply to remind people of experiences they have had in those areas. An example of one way of doing this is to be found on the Internet at

[http://www.formlessmountain.com/audio1/kw\\_audio/KW\\_16.mp3](http://www.formlessmountain.com/audio1/kw_audio/KW_16.mp3)

and another method can be found in the workshops of Genpo Roshi.

Using the principle of "States are free: stages have to be earned", we have found that people can enter into the relevant state for long enough (15 minutes for a

demonstration, 50 minutes for a full therapy session, several hours for a workshop) to be useful. No special training is needed, because all therapists have had transpersonal experiences of some kind. The only limitation to this is that a therapist may, on some specific occasion, find it hard to access the relevant state of consciousness: but of course this is always a limitation, as is well known in the case of attempting to access the unconscious mind: therapists can generally do this, but on specific occasions they may find it difficult, because of their own problems.

The second point is easier to answer, because once therapists have access to the relevant state of consciousness, there is no particular problem in using such access in two-chair work or in empty chair work.

The limitations of this approach, therefore, lie mainly in the question of the previous experience of the therapist. Someone who has never had a transpersonal experience could not access a transpersonal state of consciousness. However, Wilber (2000, p.132) makes the point that we have all had dreams, which is a form of Subtle consciousness, and we have all had dreamless sleep, which is a form of Causal consciousness. So it may be more a case of learning to respect one's own experiences of this kind and draw on them, rather than waiting for some other form of the transpersonal experience.

One of the major advantages of using the approach outlined above is that states of linking between therapist and client described by Budgell (1995), Field (1996), Hunt (2003), Mahrer (1996), Mearns (1996), Samuels (1989) and others are now acceptable and usable, rather than being suspect. These are states where the boundaries between therapist and client disappear completely, and they share the same imaginal space. This a Subtle level experience, which can now be much better

understood. The limitation here is still the readiness of the therapist to respond in the right way when this happens, and without training this may be very difficult.

Perhaps the major limitation of this work is its solitariness. I have not had the resources of an academic department or a commercial firm to collaborate with me on extending and deepening the research. There have been three collaborative efforts along the way: firstly with Peter Reason (Reason & Rowan 1981) on qualitative research methodology; secondly with Mick Cooper (Rowan & Cooper 1999) on the plural self; and thirdly with Michael Jacobs (Rowan & Jacobs 2002) on incorporating the transpersonal into mainstream counselling and psychotherapy. But for the most part the work has been done on my own, following my star, with all the narrowness that that may bring.

## **FOLLOW UP AND FUTURE PLANS**

The intention is to follow up the insights obtained in this project by taking the pursuit of dialogue within the self into more areas, collecting data from multiple sources.

This can conveniently be done in workshops devoted to this area, asking participants to hand in their dialogues for analysis and further processing. It can also be done by using the Internet to ask for volunteers to use the same process. This has a wide scope, but the limits are of course that some therapists reject the whole idea of subpersonalities. There is no way round this, and of course the same applies to the whole idea of the transpersonal. Some people in the behavioural camp see the entire realm of the transpersonal as mere superstition and makebelieve (Ellis & Yeager 1989).

This would then pave the way for a properly funded research project using good sampling techniques to get a more representative set of responses. This would tell us more about the scope and limits of the current work.

There is a further step which could also be taken, and which I have already started to explore, and that is to use the current findings in conjunction with the model which Wilber introduced in 1995, which he calls All Quadrants All Levels. Here he postulates four quadrants of all possible experience: internal subjective (the I); external subjective (the We), external objective (the They) and internal objective (the It). In the I quadrant we explore individual consciousness (as I have been doing in the research here presented); in the We quadrant we explore relationships between individuals and groups (highly relevant to psychotherapy); in the They quadrant we take into account and explore the social context within which all therapy takes place; and in the It quadrant we explore the body and the brain, including psychoneuroimmunology.

This describes an Integral Psychotherapy (Wilber 2000) which would do more justice to what is involved in therapy than any previous approach. I have published one short essay on this (Rowan 2005b) and intend to go further.

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				Wilber				Moral Span	
								(those worthy of moral consideration)	
Correlative Basic Structures	General Self-Sense	Specific Aspects	Defenses	Possible Pathology	Fulcrum	Treatment			
sensorimotor phantasmic-emotional rep-mind conop formop postformal	matter-atomic sensation perception exocept impulse/emotion image symbol	pleromatic uroboric axial-body pranic-body (typhonic) image-body (magical)	distortion delusional proj. hallucination wish fulfillment self/object fusion projection splitting isolation repression reaction form. displacement duplications transaction covert intentions suppression anticipation sublimation	psychosis F-1 (physical self) borderline F-2 (emotional self) neurotic F-3 (self-concept) script F-4 (role self) ego F-5 (mature ego) existential F-6 (centaur) psychic F-7 (psychic) subtle F-8 (subtle) causal F-9 (causal)	intense regres- sive therapies pacification (Gedo: pacification) structure- building (Gedo: unification, optimal disillusion) uncovering (Gedo: interpretation) script analysis introspection (Gedo: introspection) existential therapy path of yogis path of saints sages	egocentric sociocentric worldcentric shamanic bodhisattvic Buddhist	impulsive magical narcissism hedonic membership mythic- power safety- conformist rational- reflexive universal- global panentheistic all earthly beings (yogic) pantheistic all sentient beings in all realms (saintly)	"me" "us" family, group, tribe, nation "all of us" all humans without exception all earthly beings without exception all sentient beings in all realms without exception	locus of bodily self locus of mythic- membership locus of rational univer- sal pluralism locus of World- Soul locus of Brahma-lokas



Correlative		Affect		Levels of "Food"		Wilber		Worldviews	
Basic Structures		Gender Identity		name		general characteristics			
sensorimotor	matter-atomic -molecular -polymer	• reactivity	material exchange	• morphological-genetic givens	archaic	• undifferentiated, pleromatic	egocentric		
	sensation	• sensations	-food	• undifferentiated	archaic				
phantasmic-emotional	perception	• physiostates:	-labor				ethnocentric		
	except	touch, temperature, pleasure, pain							
rep-mind	impulse/emotion	• protoemotions:	emotional exchange	• differentiated basic-gender identity	archaic-magical	• hallucinatory wish fulfillment subject-object fusions "selfobject"	worldcentric		
	image	tension, fear, rage, satisfaction	-sex safety,		magical	• egocentric, word magic, narcissistic; locus of magic power = ego			
conop	symbol						theocentric		
	endoecept	• 2° emotions: anxiety, anger, wishing, liking, safety	power belongingness, care		magic-mythic	• omnipotence of ego challenged; security, ego omnipotence transferred to gods			
formop	concept		mental exchange	• gender conventionality	mythic (literal)	• concrete-literal myths			
	rule/role	• 3° emotions: love, joy, depression, hate,	-membership	• gender consistency (norms)	mythic	locus of magic power = deified Other			
postformal	transition	belongingness	discourse	• gender	rational	• rationalization of mythic structures			
	formal	• 4° emotions: universal affect, global justice, care, compassion, all-	-self-reflective exchange	androgyny (trans-differentiated)	holistic	• demythologizing, formalizing			
	vision-	late	exchange		rational	• static universal formalism			
	logic	middle	autonomous	• gender	formalism	• pluralistic systems, dynamic-multiple contexts/histories			
	psychic	early	exchange		pluralistic	• integrates multiple contexts, paradigmatic			
	(vision)	late	-psychic vision	androgyny (trans-differentiated)	relativism	• cross-paradigmatic; dialectical			
	subtle	early	-God communion	• archetypal gender union (tantra)	holistic	• integrates multiple contexts, paradigmatic			
	(archetype)	late	-God union		integralism	• cross-paradigmatic; dialectical			
	causal	early	spiritual exchange	• beyond	psychic	• union with World Process; nature mysticism; gross realm unity			
	(formless)	late	-Godhead identity	gender	shamanic, yogic)	• union with World Process; nature mysticism; gross realm unity			
	nondual	early	-sahaja		causal	• union with source of manifest realms; formless mysticism; causal unity			
	middle	late			formless, sage)	• union with source of manifest realms; formless mysticism; causal unity			
	late				nondual (siddha)	• union of form and formless, Spirit and World Process			
					nondual mysticism	• union of form and formless, Spirit and World Process			

## APPENDIX B

### My Roles, My Selves

BIG BRAIN: That was a very good chapter - it brought together all the decent research studies in this field and made a lot of sense of them.

MR. COMMITMENT: But what is it all about? Is it really going to help even one person give up his or her roles? Isn't it just going to make them able to play the role of student even better? Is it any more than stuff you use in order to pass an exam?

BROWN COW: And why do you want to make sense of them anyway? Just look at what you are quoting: Secord and Backman - a compilation of alienating and inhuman studies; Katz and Schank - the same thing, only more out of date; Newcomb - a paper you haven't even read, you only saw it quoted by someone else; French and Raven - you know you don't particularly like or respect their approach; Kahn *et al* - oh, you actually read this one, because it was in a handy book of readings, but the extract given didn't say exactly how the questions were asked, and the whole thing was obviously done in an oppressive organization and couldn't apply anywhere else; Vogel and Bell - all right, but you haven't read any of the background to this, you aren't really an authority on any of this stuff. I won't go on. It is all so obvious that you are just sticking other people's work all over yourself like sequins, without ever having been really involved with it.

BIG BRAIN: But that is my job - that is what I am here to do. I have to get this book out on time. If I started to get involved with everything I wrote about, this book would take

ten years to write, and by the time I got to the end I would have to rewrite all the beginning again! I agree that some of the studies are done by nasty people in a nasty way in nasty settings, but that is all there is - I have no alternative.

MR. COMMITMENT: The typical remark of the conservative - I have no choice. The conservative is always getting himself into situations where he has no choice - he really loves it. You do have a choice. You don't have to write this thing at all. It will just become another part of the marvellous academic kaleidoscope, which turns and turns in glorious profusion, but still remains the same old instrument. It is an instrument which perpetuates a class system which divides people and puts most of them down.

BROWN COW: And it is an instrument which separates the intellect from the feelings and from the body. Your chapter actually helps to perpetuate that separation.

BIG BRAIN: That's not fair. I am talking against it. I am always bringing in encounter groups and people like Schutz who refuse to separate the body and the emotions from the feelings, people and ideas which I know you like.

BROWN COW: But it almost doesn't matter what you say. It is what you are doing by writing a book at all. Let me tell you about a vision which I had - it may make it clearer.

*Vision of a kind of pointed brass thing, in the centre of a temple. It has a large diameter of about three feet at the base, and it comes up and up and up to an absolute point. The cone. The tall, tall cone. It's the centre of a vast temple. And it's burnished. And people come to it and worship. And it's me.*

*And the temple ascending all around it is all brilliant coloured lights, up to the sky. I found all these dead facts lying around, and I connected them up to the electric circuits, and when they were all connected, they made a beautiful pattern,*

*and then I put my pattern up in the sky. They have come to life, and they shine, and everyone admires their brilliance.*

*And everyone who looks up at the pattern and worships it becomes a slave. It is the looking up, and the worshipping, which makes them into slaves. And every time we take a message and put it up in the sky along with all the others, it becomes just as misleading as them. We've got to stop it getting put up in the sky. Because whatever gets up in the sky is enslaving, whatever it says. It's the fact that you have to look up at it that makes it enslaving. No matter how humble the brilliant man who put it there. Yes, the brilliant man who put it there! It's a male thing, isn't it? Always putting things up for people to admire.*

*It was this glorious pointed cone, wasn't it? Yes, what all these theories are, is big penises stuck up in the sky, all fringed with little neon lights, with their little glances, and their little prepuces, all a-glittering and a-gleaming, and occasionally gushing out with genuine heavenly magical jissom. Genuine creative magical wizard jissom from your actual magic mushroom itself. It's John Rowan's fabulous prick-palace.*

Do you see what I mean now?

BIG BRAIN: You make me feel very small. It's as if everything I do must be wrong. Yet it is the money I make which keeps the rest of you going. If I stopped I don't know what would happen to you. What do you want me to do - give up existing altogether?

MR. COMMITMENT: How predictable you are. The voice of the breadwinner down the ages. You'll be asking us to admire you next for your duplicity. The fact is that as far as I

am concerned, you could write a very valuable book, that would wake people up to what they are having done to them, and how they could stop it being done to them. But the way to do that is not to quote all these shitty authorities, most of whom are on the other side anyway, and whose actual experiments are alienating, whatever they prove or disprove. You could do it by using your own experience, and just mentioning existing experiments and the rest of it when it throws some real light on what you are saying. You've done this to some extent in this book already, particularly in Chapter 2. You can write *your own* book, not just this coat studded with other people's sequins.

BIG BRAIN: I don't know. It's more difficult. It takes longer. I didn't start this series to embody my own deepest ideas, or to rewrite social psychology; I started it because it seemed an easy way to use up my lecture notes and get out something modest but reasonably useful. Now you want to turn it into some kind of personal testament. It really isn't that big or important. It's just a book.

FATHER: But it's your *only* book. You haven't written anything else on this scale.

Inevitably you are going to be judged by this book. In a very real sense, it is you. You should have thought of that when you started. I want this book to be a credit to me. I want it to give you money, fame, international recognition.

BIG BRAIN: Oh, God! Have I got to contend with you, too? I'm not interested in all that - you can just get lost.

BROWN COW: Not interested? I think you are very interested. I think you got a lot of what you are doing from him - more than you think. It just confirms what I said - there is just a big male ego trip going on here.



BIG BRAIN : You worry me far more than Mr. Commitment does. If the worst came to the worst, I could always write *his* book - maybe not exactly as he would like it, but not too far off it; but I don't know how I can satisfy you.

BROWN COW: Well, you are satisfying me now, by writing this chapter. This is what I wanted you to do; to look at this whole thing honestly for once. And you are doing it. I admire you for that.

BIG BRAIN: But I can't keep on doing this for the rest of the book. I'm finding it hard enough to do this much now. I want to get out some books, and check out some references, and put some knowledge across. That's what I like doing.

BROWN COW: It's just something you have learned how to do, and which you got praised for. It's not the only thing you know how to do. And even if it were, you can still learn how to do other things.

MR. COMMITMENT: And who are you doing it for? Is it really the student struggling with his chores, or is it other psychologists, your reference group, as you say? Are you really trying to get through to people who genuinely want to understand the subject-matter, or is it that you want to make it in academic terms? I think you just want to get to be a professor by this back-door route Your nick-name used to be 'the professor', and you have always fancied the idea of spending a year at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. Is that really wha it's all about? Because if it is, then I despise you.

BIG BRAIN: God. I feel so weary when you say all that. You make me feel as if I just want to go away and curl up somewhere and quietly pass out. I've got a pain in my guts

and a pain in my back. But - I know I am not an oppressor. I can write a book and not be an oppressor. I can even be a professor and not be an oppressor. I can be rich and famous and not be an oppressor. I am just me.

MR. COMMITMENT: How can you be so naive? It is the system of human relationships which makes you an oppressor, not something nice or nasty inside you. It is the money system, the hierarchy system, the competition system. It is all around you, you can't escape it. One individual can't resist it. One individual is nothing.

BROWN COW: One individual is everything. It is all you really know. I know that I am not an oppressor because I reject money, I reject hierarchy, I reject competition. If I interact with people on that basis, I help them to do that too, if that is what they want to do. I can't force them either way, and I don't want to try. You can't 'fight against' systems - that is their way, those are their words. You can only evade them, outflank them, slip through them, turn them on, surprise them, puzzle them; not by trying to, but just by being yourself.

MR. INTENSITY: (Series of screams, animal noises, groans, chattering, howls, etc.)

BIG BRAIN: Thanks. I felt a bit like that myself.

MR. INTENSITY: Book balloon. (Long silence.)

BIG BRAIN: Do you mean that my book is a lot of hot air? Or that it expands to fill the space available? Or that it can go pop at any moment? Or that it rises into the air?

BROWN COW: Can't you stop that busy brain for a moment? And listen?

MR. COMMITMENT: It obviously means that the book carries you into the academic clouds.

BROWN COW: And you be quiet too.

MR. PUTDOWN: No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No!  
No! No! No! No! No! No!

MR. COMMITMENT: I wondered how long it would take you to show up.

MR. PUTDOWN: Why don't you leave him alone? You'd be nothing without him. You're a luxury - you're expendable. I'm real. I'm basic. And this time you've gone far enough. Any more and you'll stop him writing this book at all. And you've all missed the real point of my book - it is to put down all my enemies. It is to be an expression of my pure hate. That's why I really enjoyed Chapter 2 of Book 1 more than all the rest put together. Actually I wish I'd made it nastier now. Chapter 2 of this volume wasn't bad either, but not really my style, much too emotional - I prefer the rapier. I've said too much; I prefer to remain in the background. Just remember what I said.

BROWN COW: I feel a bit stunned by that. I didn't realize you had him to contend with as well. I can't help feeling some sort of grudging respect that you manage to get anything written at all. And that it isn't much worse than it is.

MR. COMMITMENT: Don't let him off the hook.

BROWN COW: I love him. My heart goes out to him when I see him like this.

MR. COMMITMENT: But that's how he does it to you. He's still just as much of a shit as ever. I love him too, but I'm not going to let him get away with it so easy.

BROWN COW: You're different from me. You have your way. I have mine. You fight your own battles.

MR. COMMITMENT: Oh, God! Is there no end to this struggle?

MR. INTENSITY: Implosion

**Extract from:**

Rowan, John (1976) *Psychological Aspects of Society: Book 3: The Power of the Group*

London: Davis-Poynter (Chapter 5: "My Roles, My Selves" pp.103-108)

## APPENDIX C

**Table 1: THE EXTRAPERSONAL AND THE TRANSPERSONAL**

<i>Extrapersonal</i>	<i>Transpersonal</i>
Spoon-bending	Higher self
Levitation	Deep self (Starhawk 1989)
Dowsing	Transpersonal self (Whitmore 2004)
Working with crystals	High archetypes (Jung)
Clairvoyance	The soul (Hillman 1975)
Telepathy	The superconscious (Whitmore 2004)
Radionics	Creativity (surrendered self type)
Radiesthesia	Some peak experiences (Maslow 1970)
Blindsight	Intuition (surrendered self type)
Fire-walking	Some healing
Bloodless skin-piercing	Some near-death experiences
Out-of-body experiences	Upper chakras
Paranormal generally	Subtle energy systems
Fakirism	Guidance self (Whitmont 1969)
Mind over matter	The Self
The psychic	Transfigured self (Heron 1988)

[Taken from p.8 of John Rowan (2005a)]

**TABLE 2: THE MENTAL EGO VS. THE CENTAUR OR AUTHENTIC SELF**

<b>MENTAL EGO</b>	<b>CENTAUR OR AUTHENTIC SELF</b>
MASLOW CHART LEVELS 3 – 4	MASLOW CHART LEVELS 5 – 6
Happy to play a role	Critiques the whole idea of roles
Wants to know other people's opinions	Not interested in mere opinions
Sees through other people's eyes	Sees through own eyes
Needs support all the time	Needs little support
Needs praise	Likes praise
Brought down by criticism	Meets criticism positively
The power is outside	The power is inside
The world is full of challenges	The world is full of opportunities
Crippled by failure	Energised by failure
Standards come from outside	Has internal gyroscope
Likes to follow the known path	Likes to be creative
Needs to be liked	Likes to be liked
Perception distorted by social needs	Clear perception
Prone to guilt, shame, anxiety	Self acceptance
Cautious	Spontaneous
Ego or close group centred	World centred
Fear of solitude	Like solitude
No peak experiences	Some peak experiences
Fearful of others	Respectful of others
No real intimacy	Capable of intimacy

Humour is often hostile	Humour is not hostile
Creativity is difficult	Creativity is easy
Conforms to culture	Can see through culture
Likes either-or thinking	Sees through either-or positions
Many internal splits	Few internal splits
Defensive	Non-defensive
Logic is Aristotelian and Boolean. Single-valued logic	Vision-logic, dialectical logic, Hegelian logic

TABLE 3: Difference in functioning in the two self-states

'ME'	'I'
Socially defined self	Personally defined self
Behaviour guided by incorporated social standards	Goals set by own values
Morality defined by society	Morality based on personal values
Agenda for what has to be done set by Society	Agenda set by self
Enables problem solution according to social standards	New, creative solutions
Repository of social knowledge and expectations	Contains self-knowledge
Provides social viewpoint in line with assimilated social values, attitudes and interactions	Reacts creatively to 'me'.
Passive recipient or reactive self	Proactive
Concerned with past and future	Experiencing the present
Focus on others	Focus on self
Lives in roles	Acts from present personal values
Negative feelings and distress occur as a result of judgement of others	Distress occurs as a result of not meeting own goals

Zimring (2001): p.92



**TABLE 4: THE AUTHENTIC SELF VERSUS THE SOUL OR SUBTLE**

<b>AUTHENTIC SELF</b>	<b>SOUL OR SUBTLE</b>
Separate	Connected
Clear perception	Love
Likes boundaries	Not much interested in boundaries
Thinks in words, likes imagery	Thinks in imagery, suspicious of words
Uses dialectical way of thinking	Uses intuitive way of thinking
Can use symbols	Immersed in symbols
Interested in people	Interested in people, animals, plants...
The divine may be out there	The divine can be in here
Understanding is the most important thing	Imagination is the most important thing
Interested in knowing	Interested in not-knowing
Thoughtful compassion	Emotional compassion
Finds self in contrast to other	Finds self in other
Creative	Surrendered, inspired
Trees can be beautiful	Trees can be devas (nature spirits)
Has internal gyroscope	Has daimon (genius, angel, inner teacher)
Good at psychotherapy	Good at healing
In touch with the body	In touch with the subtle body
Has many skills	Waits for guidance
In touch with own authentic self	In touch with the divine
Steers clear of magic	Can use magic

Uses experiential knowing	Uses intuition
Creativity comes from inside	Creativity comes from outside inspiration
Ecstasy is personal	Ecstasy is divine
Clear about boundaries	Can allow boundaries to disappear
Not much interest in mythology	Steeped in mythology, fairy tales, etc
Sees what is visible	Sees what is invisible
Interested in bodymind energy	Interested in subtle energy

**TABLE 5: SUBTLE VERSUS CAUSAL**

<b>SOUL/SUBTLE</b>	<b>SPIRIT/CAUSAL</b>
Fascinated by symbols	No interest in symbols
Concerned with gender	No concern with gender
Polytheistic	Monotheistic or nontheistic
Juicy compassion	Constant clear compassion
Knows many techniques	Invents techniques as necessary
Deep linking with the other	No need for distinction between self and other
Interested in angels and auras	No interest in such things
Values diversity	Sees through distinction between unity and diversity
Fascinated by paradox	Paradox runs through everything
Values the third eye	Rises above the third eye
Focused on many beings	Focused on Being
Concern to build up resources	Infinite resources without concern
Creative approach to problems	No concept of a problem
Deeply identified with Nature	One with Nature
Can relate to trees as devas	Is all the trees in the world, and all the tree-cutters too, and the no-tree
Has compassion for the unfortunate	Has compassion for the unfortunate and for the fortunate

Wants the World Soul to be well and happy and free from suffering	Knows that the World Soul is already well and happy and free from suffering
Wants to save what was lost	No one has lost everything
Unafraid of what is alien	No fear because nothing is alien
Rejoices in the Many	One-ing
Rejoices in the rich taste of all	There is nothing to taste, and no one to taste it. Or perhaps there is just one taste.

**TABLE 6: CAUSAL VERSUS NONDUAL**

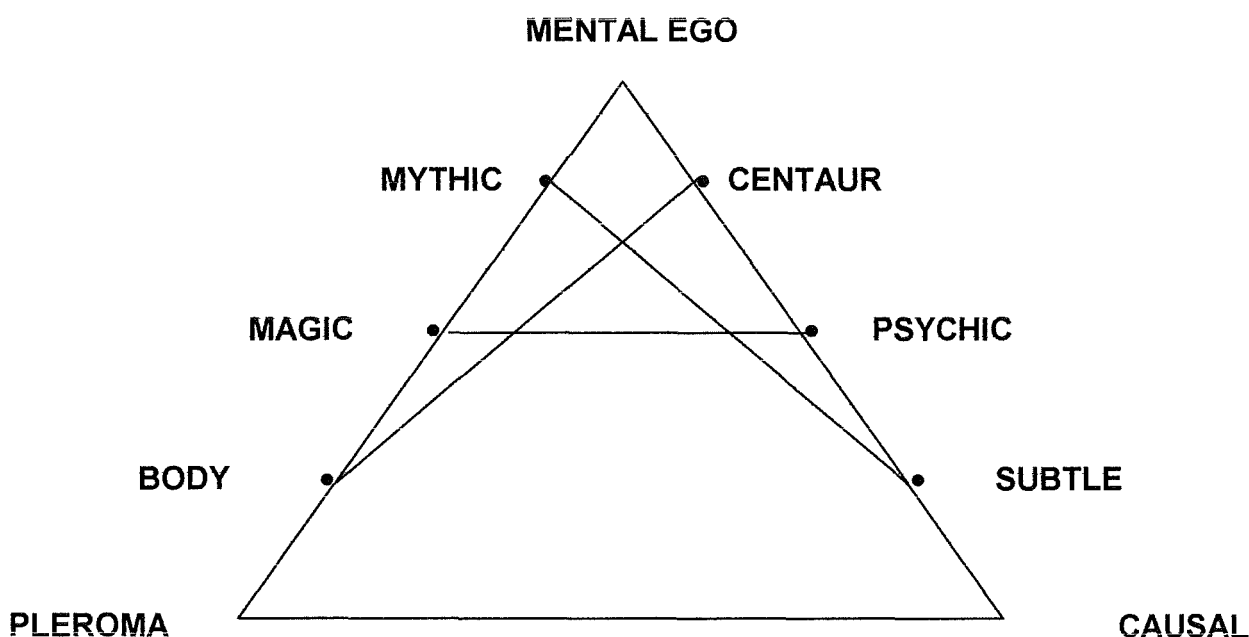
CAUSAL	NONDUAL
The Dance of Being	It's not at the end of any continuum
No desires	No such thing as a desire
Eternal infinite selfing	Nothing needed
Not the peace of ignoring everything, but the peace of embracing everything	Who indeed?!
No need to get attached to Freedom, either	Laughter... Laughing...
There is no portal! I am already there! I have always been already there!	Ecstasy doesn't need an experiencer
The Clarity and the Mystery are one and the same	Not this, not that – and not NOT, either!
Steady breath of compassion	Not about altered states of consciousness – no one here to be conscious!
One-ing...	...Already given up long ago...
The Inner Light and the Inner Dark are one and the same	The brightness of the fog
Just this. Just this.	Two onions and a piece of string
Of course I am God! Of course I am not God!	What do you mean – "God"?

What ecstasy!	What ecstasy?
The Earth is empty!	What Earth?
It's all here! Nothing is missing!	Eleven fingers
No fear, because nothing is alien.	The sun in the mud
Compassion flows freely.	Blood runs uphill exploding
The centre is everywhere	What centre?
Can't explain it	Not the slightest need to explain it
I insist on the absence of categories	No need to insist on anything
No fear	No one to be afraid of anything
Thou Art That!	What?
Meditation is the way	Meditation is a pile of dead leaves in the driveway
Paradox is an important key	Paradox, schmaradox!
Big Mind	Big Joke
The biggest prison of all	What prison?
It's all there!	Where?
At last! It all makes sense	At last! It all makes nonsense

FIGURE 1: TRIANGLE OF CONFUSIONS

1. **Pleroma** – or material fusion, the lowest stage of structural organization, recapitulated in humans via the primary matrix. Prepersonal (PP).
2. **Body** – simple sensorimotor intelligence and emotional-sexual drives. Sense of being identified with the body. (PP)
3. **Magic** – the first symbolic cognitive mode, primary process: confuses inside and outside, whole and part, subject and predicate, image and reality. (PP)
4. **Mythic** – higher representational thought, but still incapable of formal-operational insight; still anthropomorphic; mixture of logic with previous magic. (PP)
5. **Mental ego** – egoic rationality and formal-operational logic. This is the 'normal' consensus consciousness of Western society. Personal.
6. **Centaur** – integration of vision-logic mind with emotional body; the unified bodymind. The existential self: autonomous, integrated, authentic. Transpersonal (TP).
7. **Psychic** – actual psychic capacity, or the beginning of transpersonal modes. Always some sense of the divine being involved. (TP)
8. **Subtle** – home of high archetypes, or exemplary and transindividual patterns of manifestation. Symbols and images cultivated to represent divinity. (TP)
9. **Causal** – ultimate unity in only Spirit. No symbols or images at this stage. (TP) The Nondual is said to be a further stage of development beyond this, but could only be represented by the paper on which the whole diagram is drawn.

It is easy to confuse the prepersonal with the transpersonal, and this is called the Pre/Trans Fallacy. In particular, certain confusions are very common:



Based on Ken Wilber's "Eye to Eye" pages 239-243